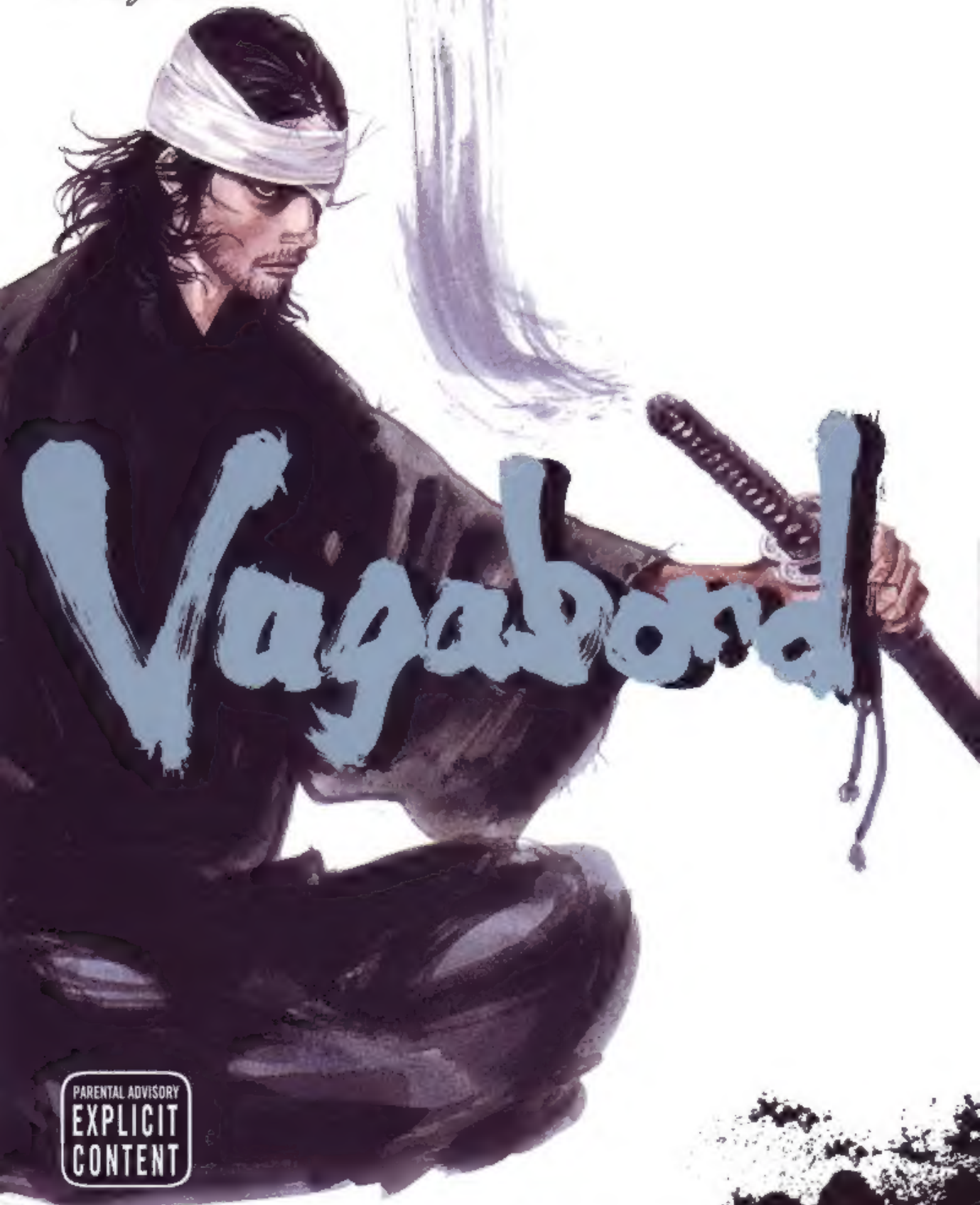
viz Signature



Vagabond

PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 22

English Edition

Vagabond Vol. 22

VIZ Signature Edition

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Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

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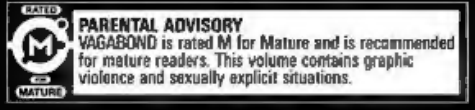

RATED
M
MATURE
PARENTAL ADVISORY
VAGABOND is rated M for Mature and is recommended for mature readers. This volume contains graphic violence and sexually explicit situations.

Vagabond

vol. 22

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

HOW MANY TIMES WILL YOU FORCE ME TO DRAW OUT MY FATAL STROKE...?
HUF
HUF
I DON'T UNDER-STAND IT...
THMP THMP
HMPH.
HERE HE COMES.

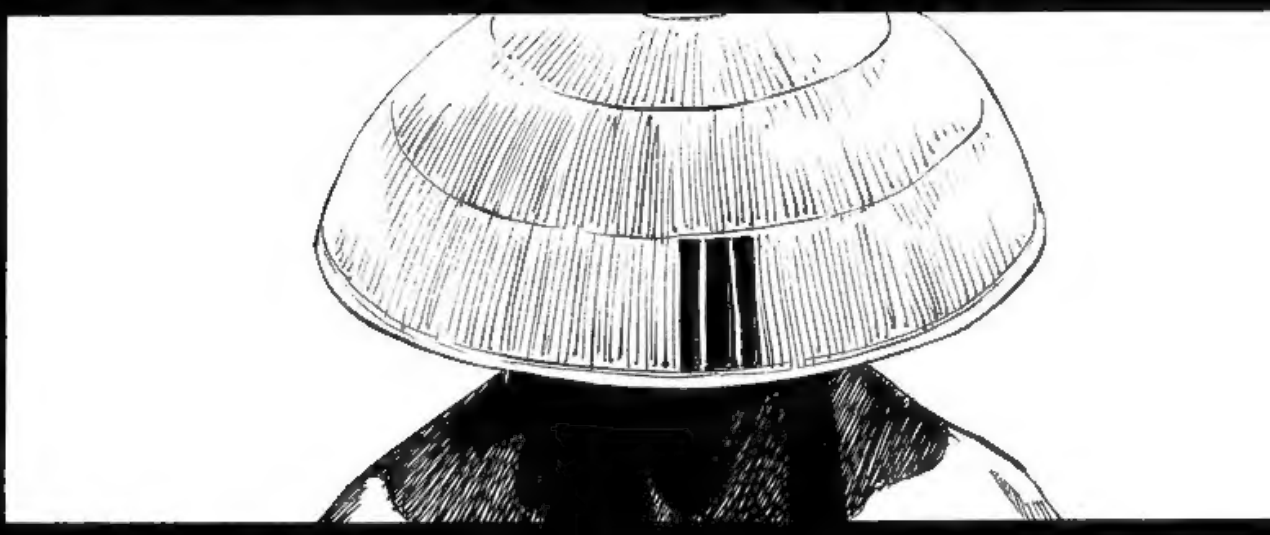
#189
Burdened

THAT SMALL BODY LOOKS SO HUGE.
THAT'S THE YOSHIOKA STYLE.
PUTTING YOUR ENTIRE SELF INTO THE SWORD.

TWENTY YEARS AGO... RENDAIJI FIELD

FICH
FICH
FICH

YOU WERE SENTENCED TO DEATH.
NOW YOUR LIFE IS IN MY HANDS.



FWMP

ZWRR
ZWRR

FIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE.
FWISH
FWISH
FWISH
HAK HAK
HOW BOTHER-SOME...
THE GRASS IS TOO TALL.

FWISH

HMPH

SEIJŪRŌ, THIS WILL BE NOTHING LIKE PRACTICING IN THE DOJO.
PERFECTING ONE'S SKILLS...

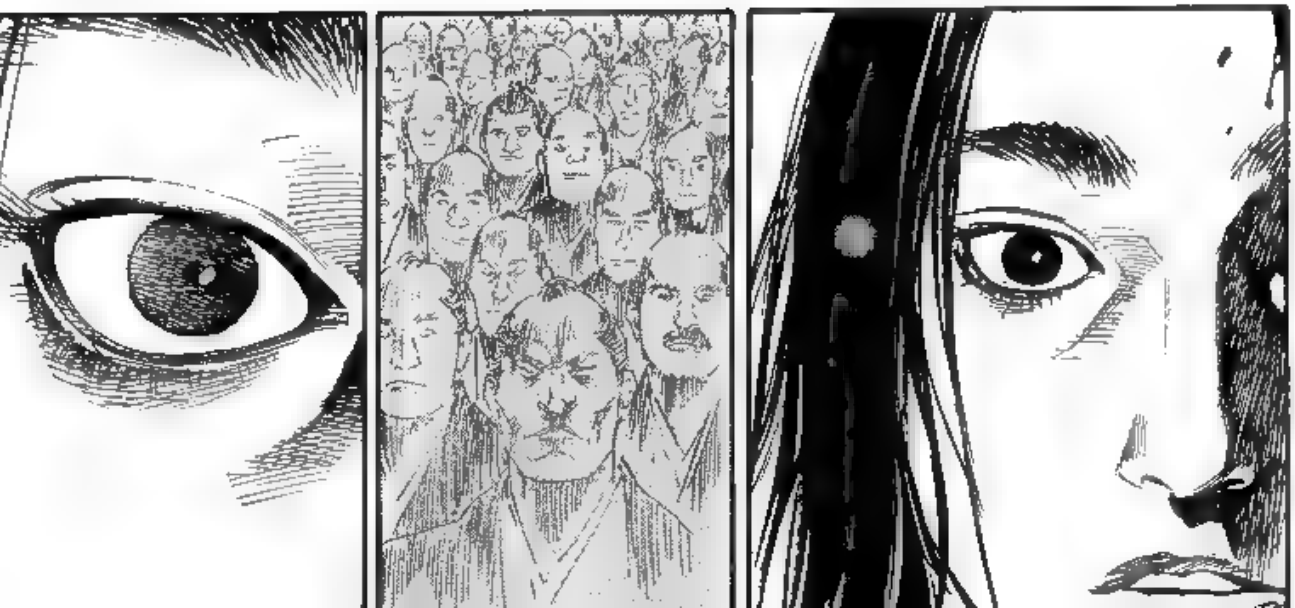
WOOSH
CULTIVATING ONE'S KI...

THE BABY HAS ARRIVED, SIR.
IT'S A BOY.
A BABY BOY.
吉岡拳法
(YOSHIOKA KEMPO)

AN HEIR TO THE YOSHIOKA CLAN.

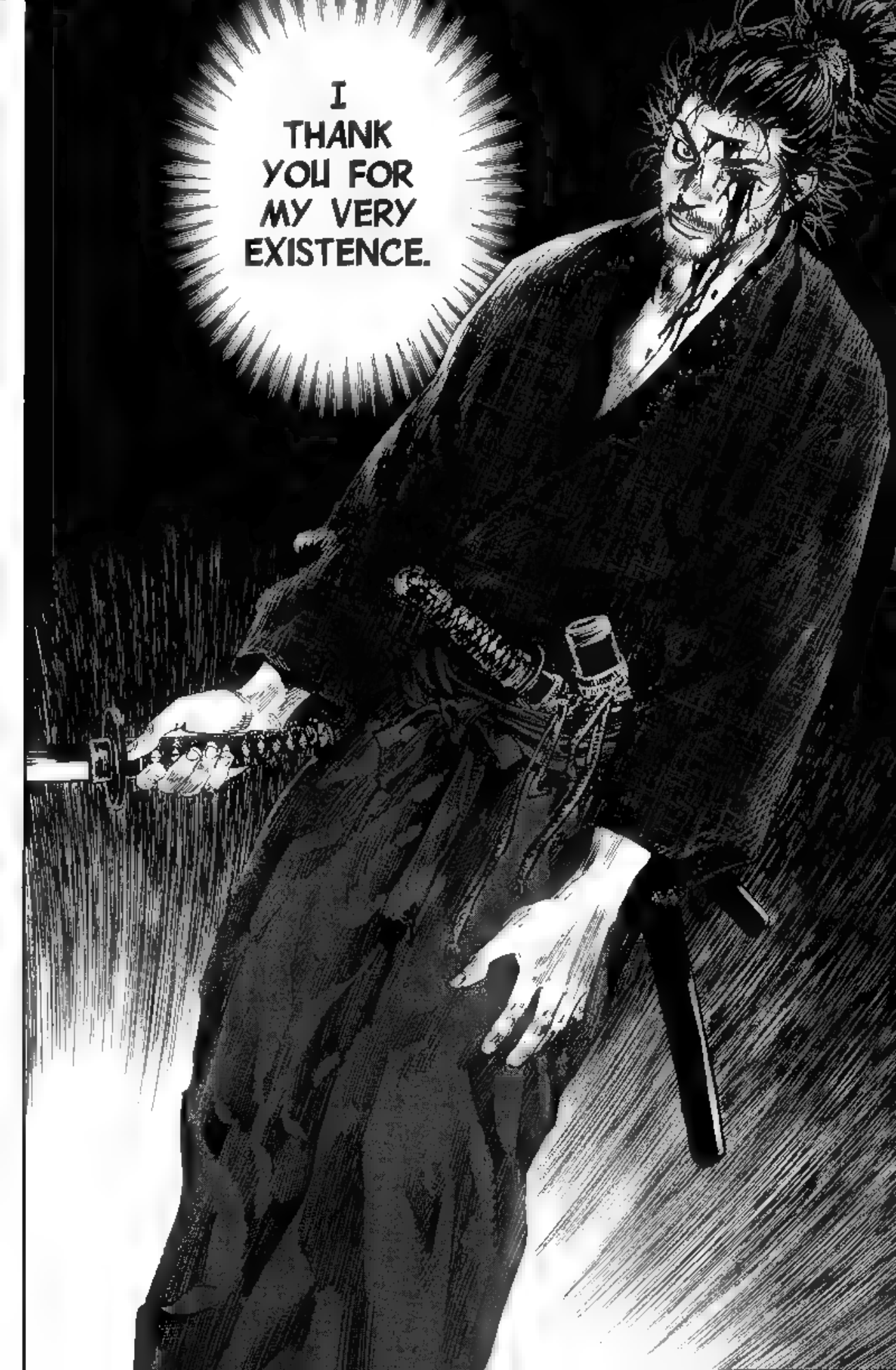
FOLLOWING THE WAY....

PUTTING EVERY-THING INTO THE SWORD.



THMP-
THMP
HUF
HUF
.....
THMP
I CAN'T HELP BUT...
.....

I'M GRATEFUL FOR THIS LIFE.
THIS MAN...
I CAN PUT EVERYTHING I HAVE UP AGAINST HIM.
OH, GODS OF WAR...


I
THANK
YOU FOR
MY VERY
EXISTENCE.

IN THIS FLEETING MOMENT...
HIS FOCUS DIVERTED BY THE WEIGHT OF HIS BURDEN...
YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ WAS CUT DOWN AT RENDAIJI FIELD.

Vagabond

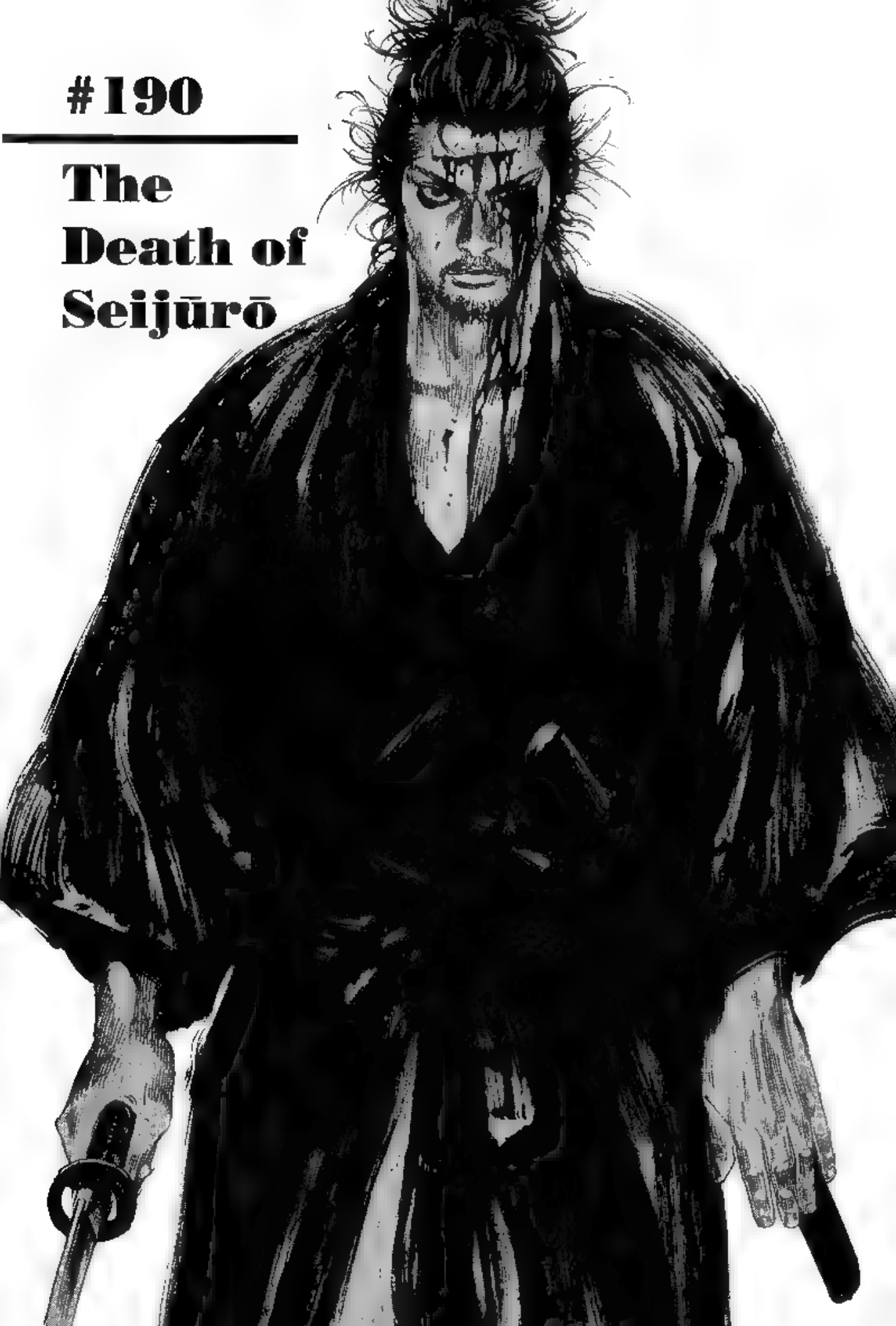
(TEN YEARS OLD)
10

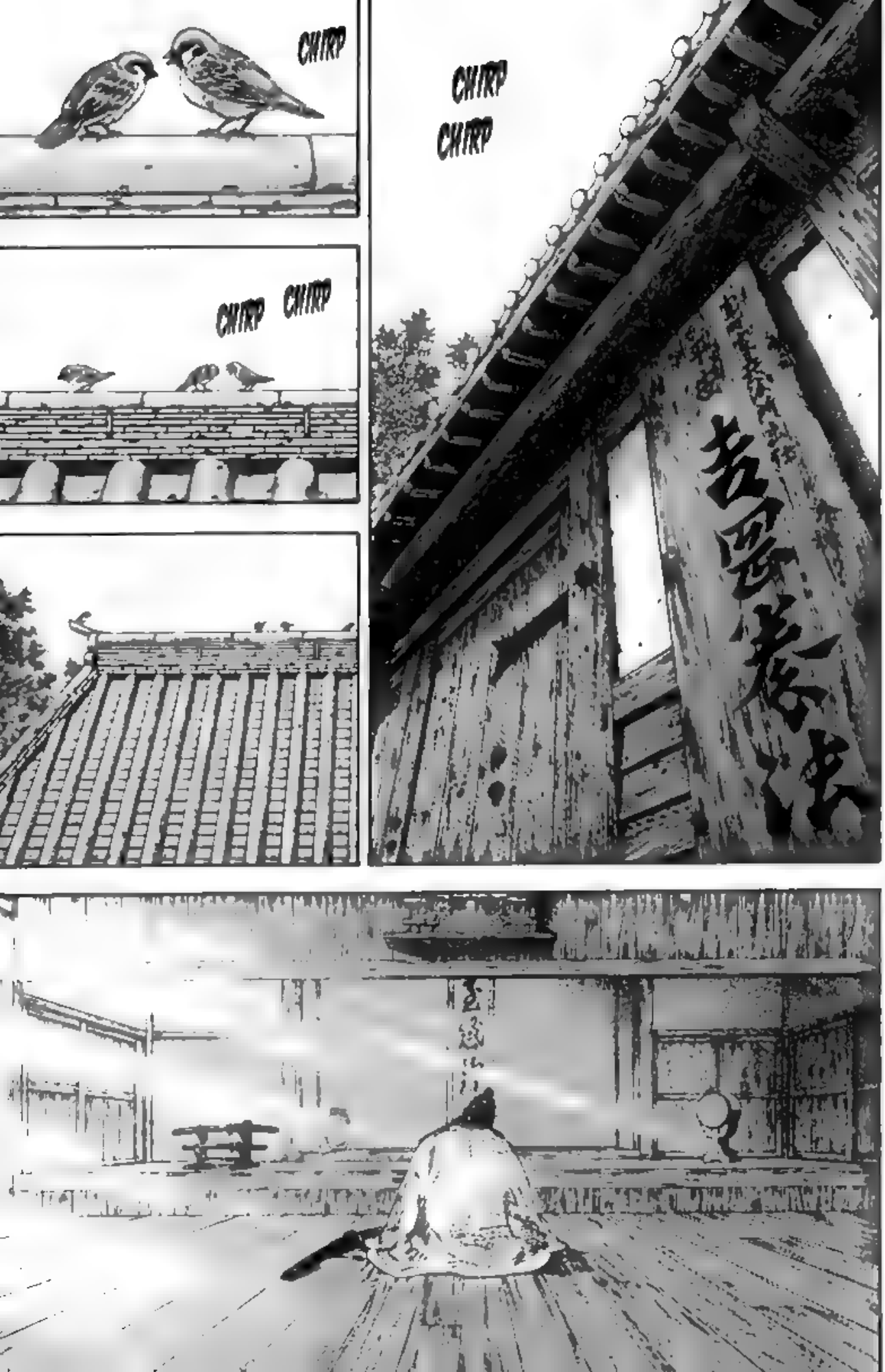
GASP!
!!

HUF
HUF

#190

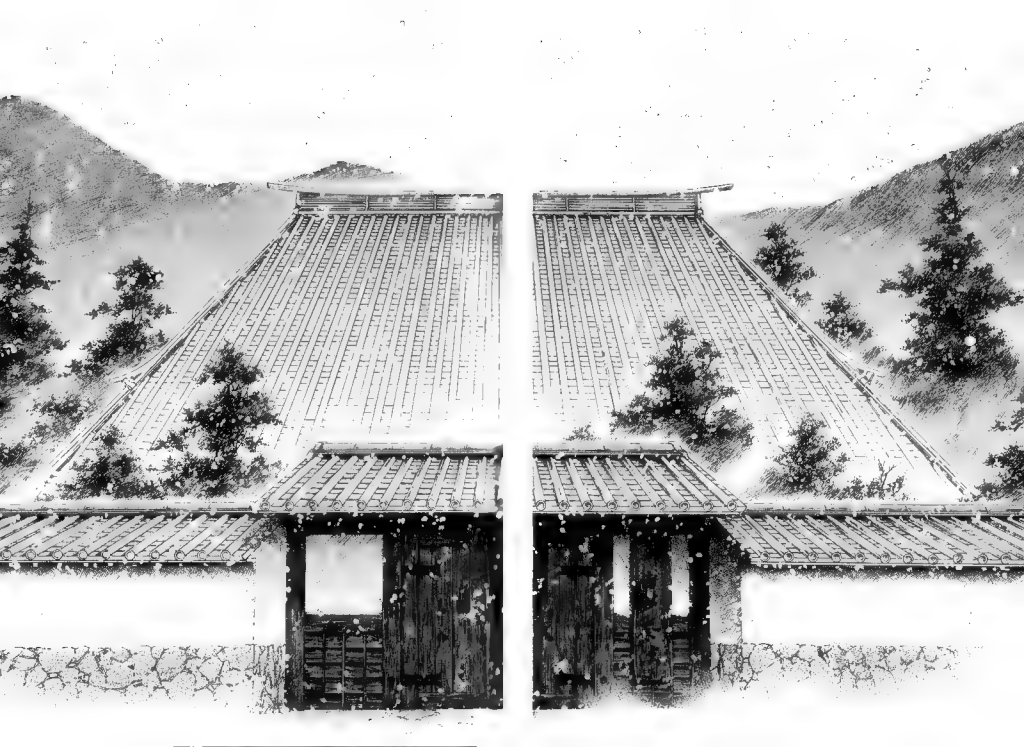
The Death of Seijūrō

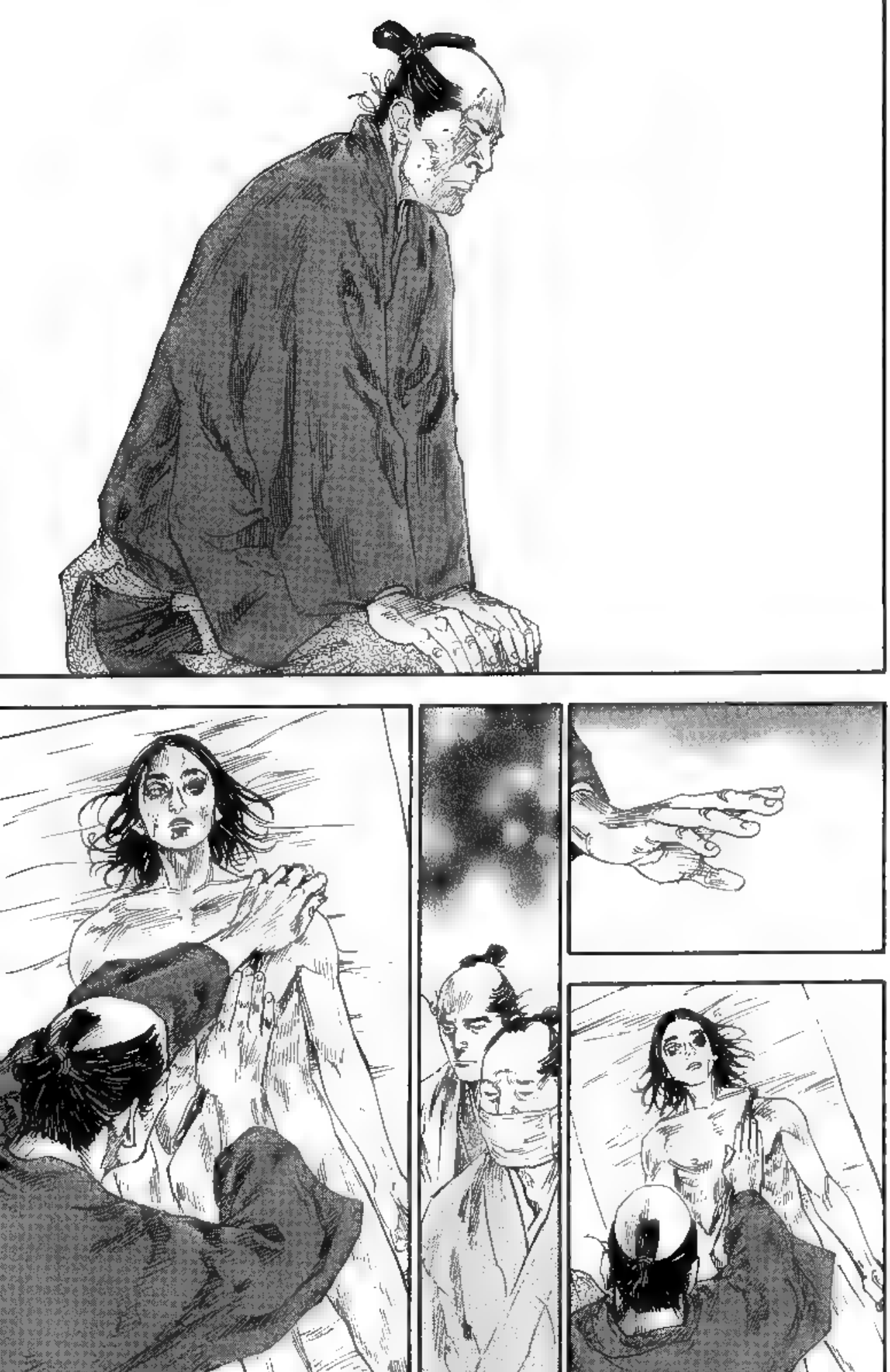



CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP

YAWN...
NOD
LIMF.
HE'LL PROBABLY BE HOME IN THE AFTERNOON AS ALWAYS.
SO IT *WAS* POINTLESS WAITING FOR HIM.
BRRR
AND IT'S FREEZ-ING!
IT'S MORN-ING...
DAMN...
MORNING, YOICHI.
DENSHICHIRŌ SENSEI!
REEKING OF PERFUME AND MAKEUP.
HMPH.

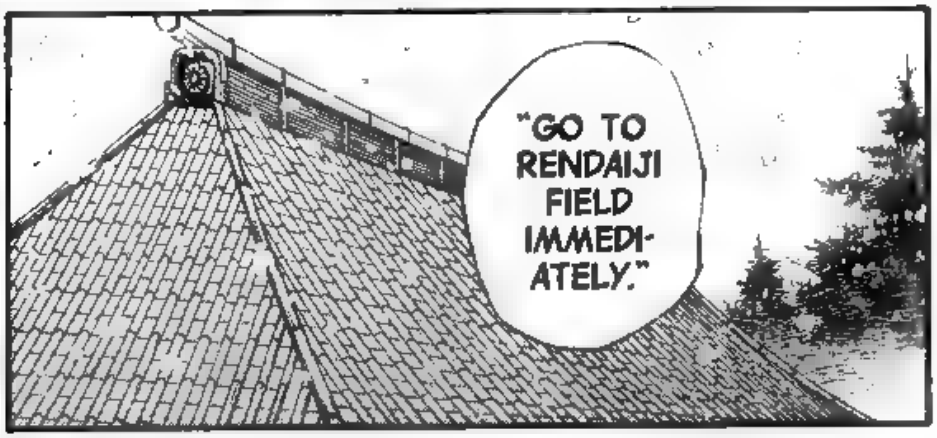
SEIJŪRŌ SENSEI IS...
SIR!!
WHEN MY BROTHER RETURNS, YOU BRING HIM HERE EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO DRAG HIM BY THE SCRUFF OF HIS NECK.
I'M GOING TO TRAIN WITH HIM!
DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY.
I'M GOING TO TAKE A NAP.
HMM ?
WHAT IS IT, YOICHI?
HE'S...





HOW COULD HE HAVE BEEN CUT DOWN?
I DON'T UNDER-STAND.
THIS CAN'T BE TRUE...

武蔵


"GO TO RENDAIJI FIELD IMMEDIATELY."

(MUSASHI)

WHY DID HE FIGHT MUSASHI?
DENSHICHIRO WAS SUPPOSED TO FIGHT HIM IN A MATTER OF DAYS.
I DON'T GET IT.

BLOOD...
AND IT'S FRESH.
IT MUST HAVE HAPPENED LAST NIGHT...

SO YOU FOUND THIS POSTED AT THE ENTRANCE.
PASS IT HERE, KURANDO.
YES, THIS MORNING WHILE I WAS SWEEPING.

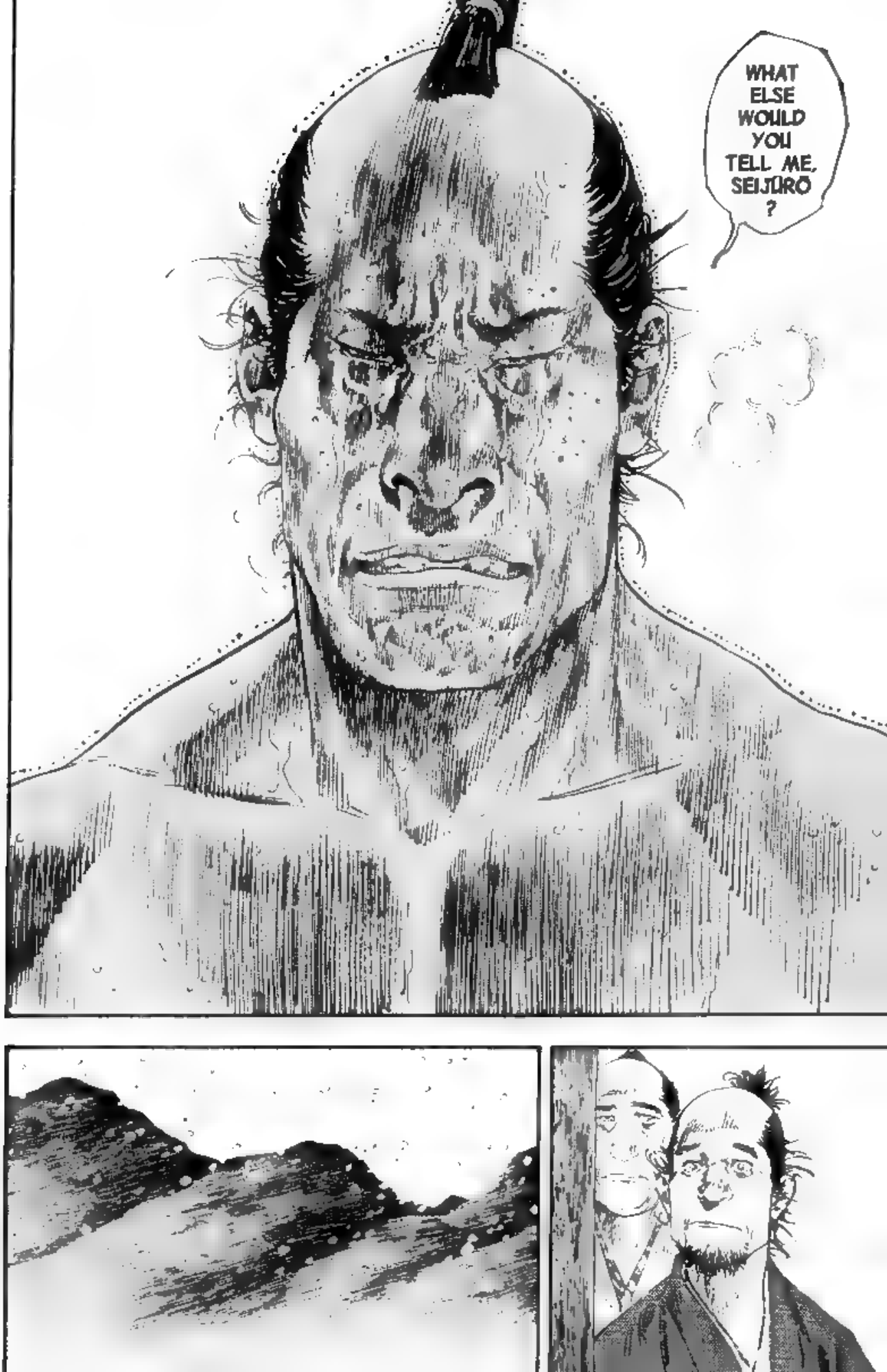
INDEED...
HE WAS AN ENIGMA...

AND SOON THE RUMORS TOUCHED UPON THE TRUTH.
BUT SECRETS ALWAYS HAVE A WAY OF LEAKING.
IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT SEIJŪRŌ'S DEATH WAS CAUSED BY AN ILLNESS.
THE NEWS WOULD HAVE CAUSED IRREPARABLE DAMAGE TO THE DISTINGUISHED YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.
IN ANY CASE, NO ONE MUST FIND OUT ABOUT THIS!!
BUT...
IT'S INCONCEIVABLE.
BESIDES, HE WAS FIGHTING AGAINST OUR MASTER.
HOW COULD YOU...CUT SOMEONE LIKE THAT? EVEN CHOPPING OFF AN ARM REQUIRES SUCH GREAT SKILL AND FORCE.
IF MUSASHI REALLY DID DO THIS...
...DID MUSASHI REALLY KILL HIM?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THUNK
...WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO RECONSIDER OUR PLANS.

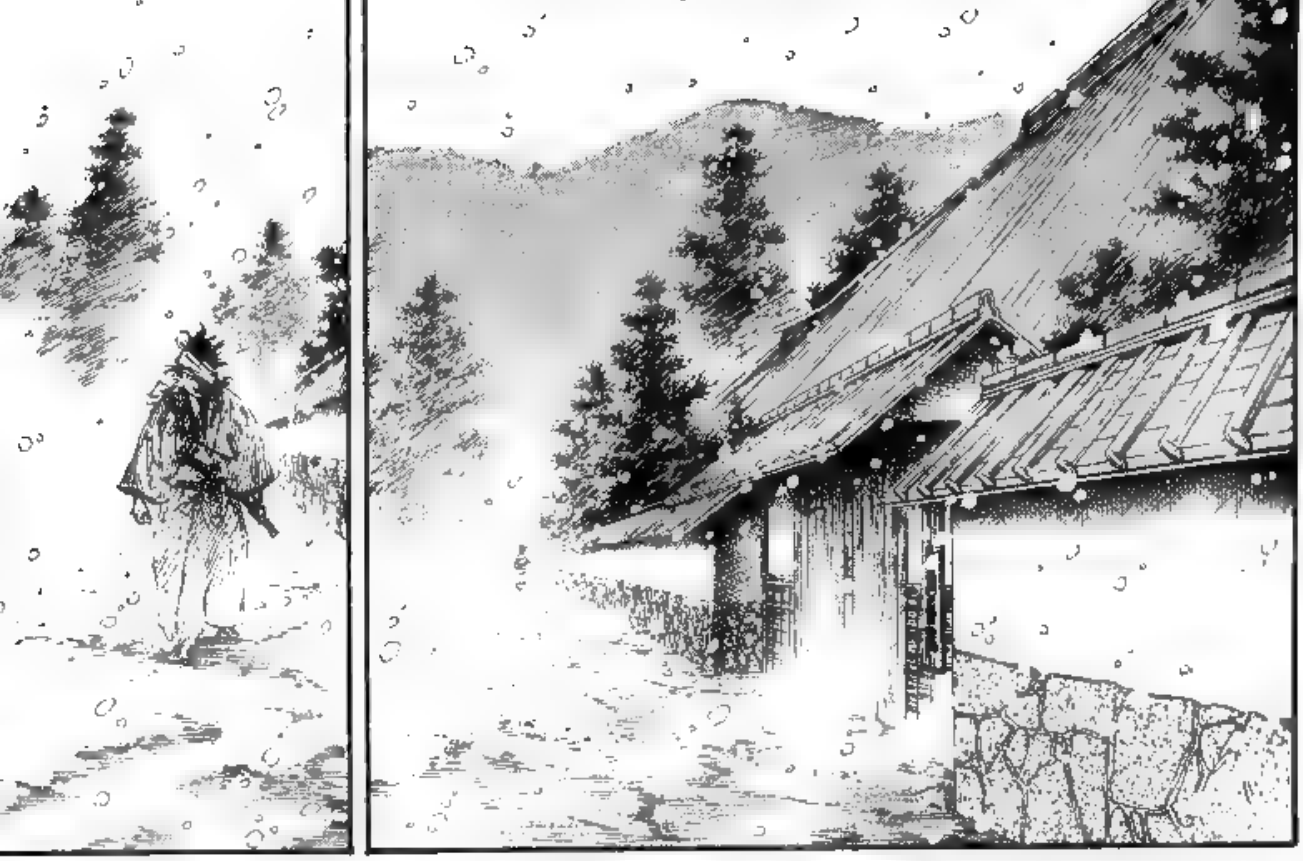
THUNK
HAH!
FWISH
YAH!
FWISH
HAH!
FOOM
HAH!
FWISH

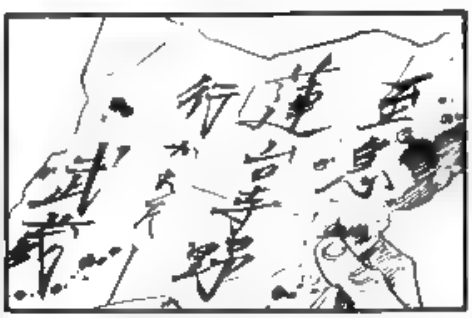
DON'T RELY ON BRUTE STRENGTH...
HUF
HUF
...JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE BIG.
HUF
HUF
DON'T GRIP THE HANDLE SO TIGHTLY.
FWOOSH
FWISH
HUF
HUF
HUF
WHAT ELSE...?
WHAT ELSE...?

KLATTA
KLATTA
TUNK
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
WHAT ELSE WAS THERE?
HUF


WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU TELL ME, SEIJŪRŌ ?

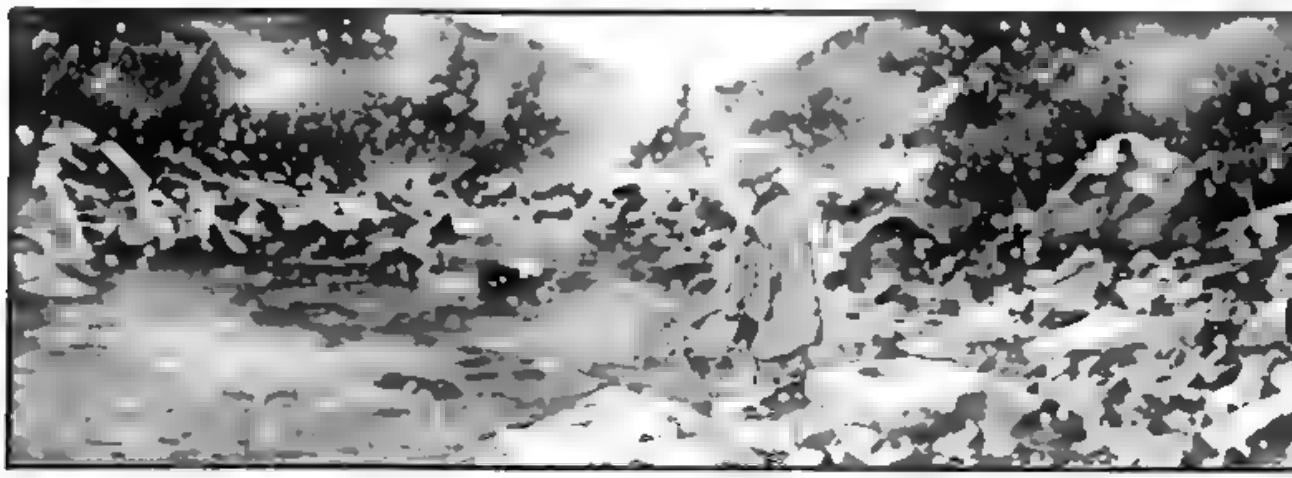
Vagabond





(GO TO RENDAIJI FIELD IMMEDIATELY.)

#191 Painting with Water



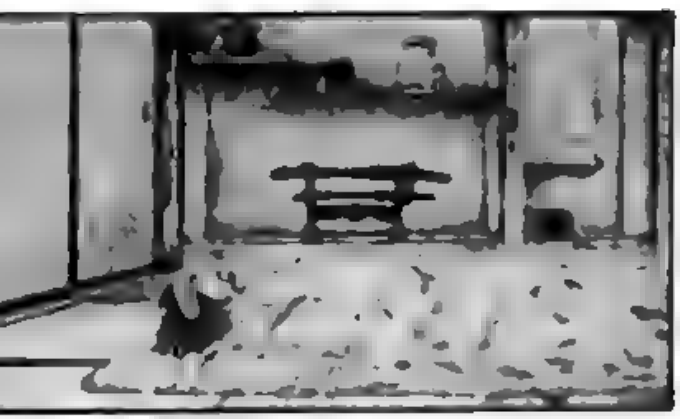
HM?

FWP
SPLISH
PLSH
PLSH
TING
KRICH

A SWORD WOUND...
AND WHO WAS UNFORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE CUT DOWN BY YOU! SO EARLY IN THE NEW YEAR?

YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ...
...
AMAZING!
GOOD ONE.
HA HA HA HA!
ZWOOP
KRICH
KRICH
...

...
ZW.IP
...
KRICH
UMM...
...YOU WOULD HAVE SOME SPACE WHERE I MIGHT REST? A STORAGE SHED, MAYBE?
PERHAPS...
FWAP
MHEM.
HUH?



KŌETSU, I'M NOT SURE YOU SHOULD WELCOME THAT RONIN HERE.

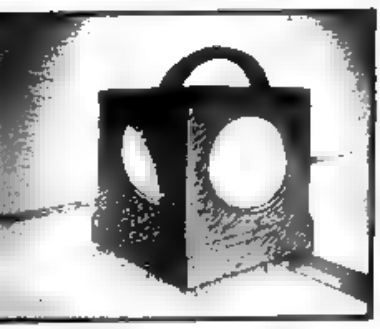
I KNOW I'M ALSO ANOTHER DRIFTER...
...I SUPPOSE I'M THE SAME AS HIM...
...
GLEAM
YES...
HE LOOKS VERY SUSPICIOUS.
I MEAN LOOK AT HIM.
YOU EVEN ATTENDED TO HIS WOUNDS...
HE'S SLEEPING WELL.
LOOKS LIKE IT'LL SNOW THROUGH THE NIGHT.

MY SWORD DISAPPEARED.

AND...

...SO DID MY ARM...

I CAN'T REMEMBER HOW I MANAGED TO CUT HIM DOWN.

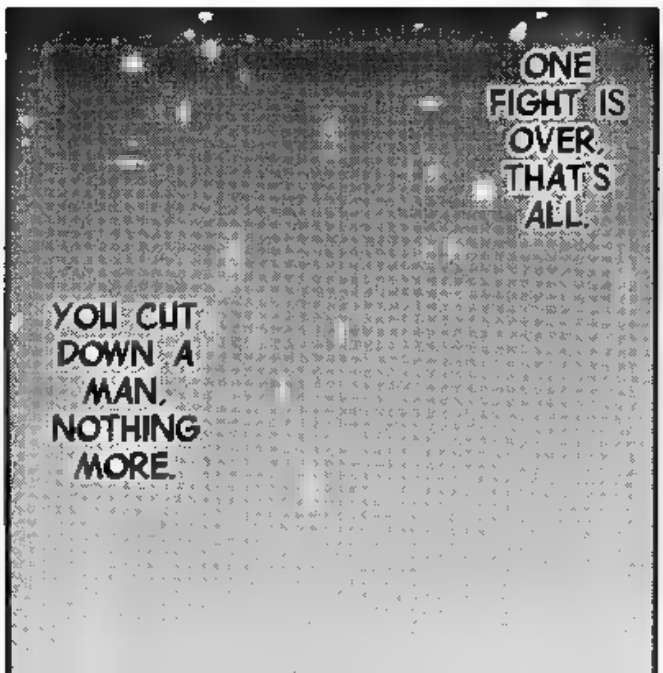


I BROUGHT YOU A LAMP...

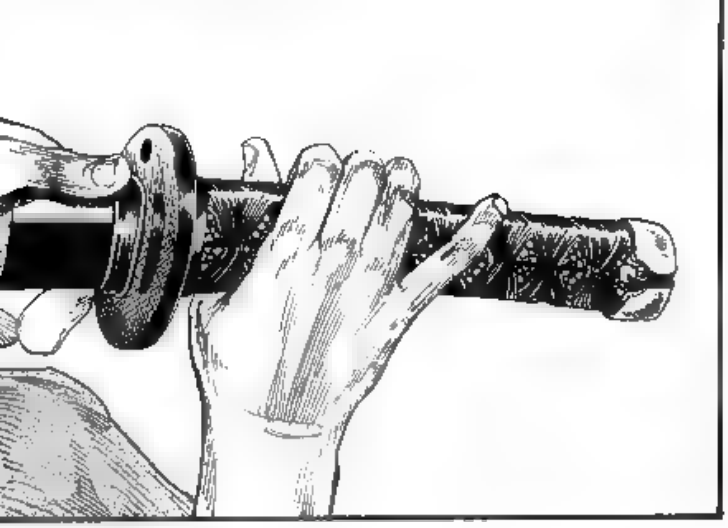
THERE'S NO POINT IN GETTING TO KNOW SOMEONE YOU'RE ABOUT TO KILL.

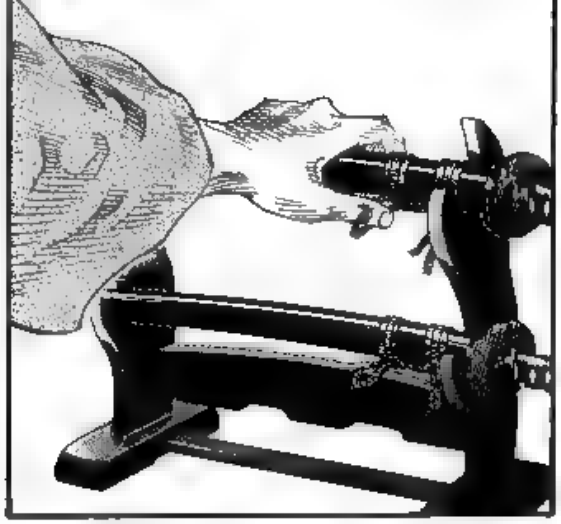
IT'S STRANGE...

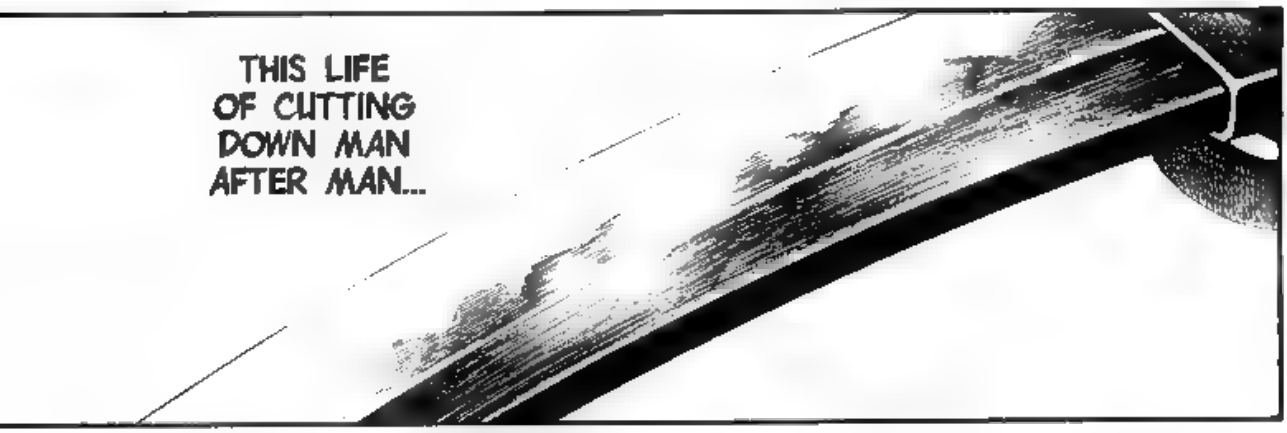
BUT I DO UNDERSTAND YOUR URGE TO TALK.


ONE FIGHT IS OVER. THAT'S ALL.
YOU CUT DOWN A MAN. NOTHING MORE.

DON'T LINGER ON THIS VICTORY.



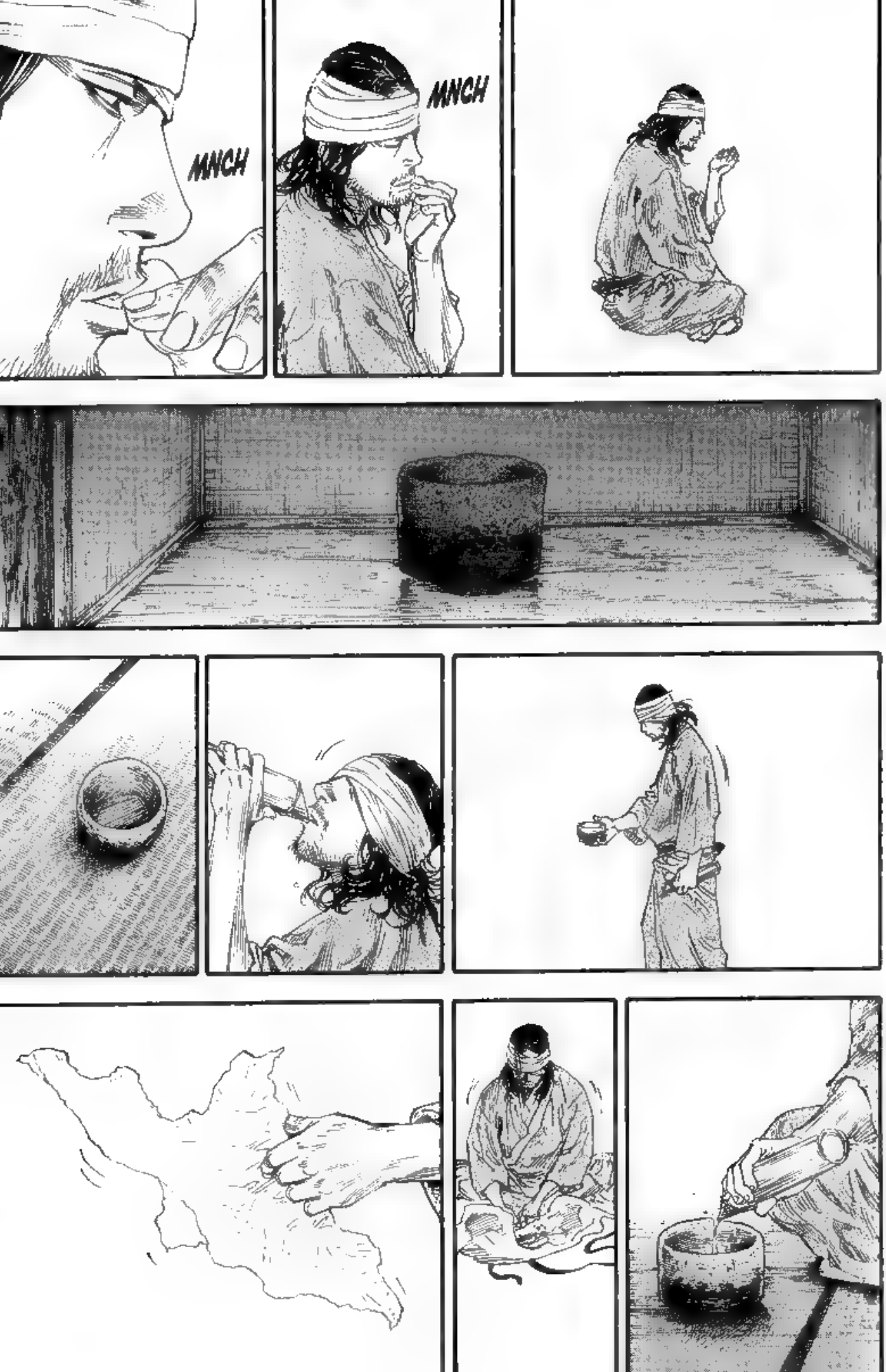



THIS LIFE OF CUTTING DOWN MAN AFTER MAN...

THAT'S THE SPIRAL OF KILLING WHICH IS YOUR DAY-TO-DAY EXISTENCE.

PERFECTING YOUR SKILLS...
STRIVING TO LISTEN TO YOUR OWN BODY'S TRUTH...

THINK ONLY ABOUT YOUR ART.

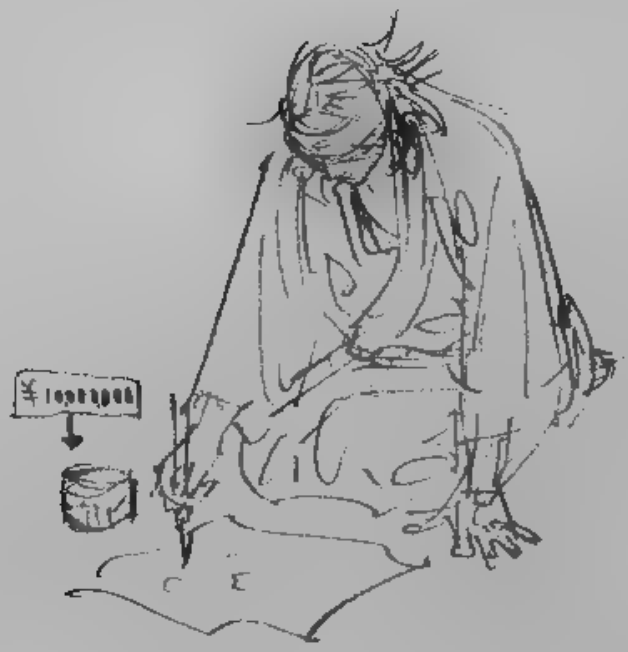

MNCH
MNCH

TP

I BEAT YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ.

I THOUGHT I'D FEEL HAPPIER ABOUT IT.

Vagabond

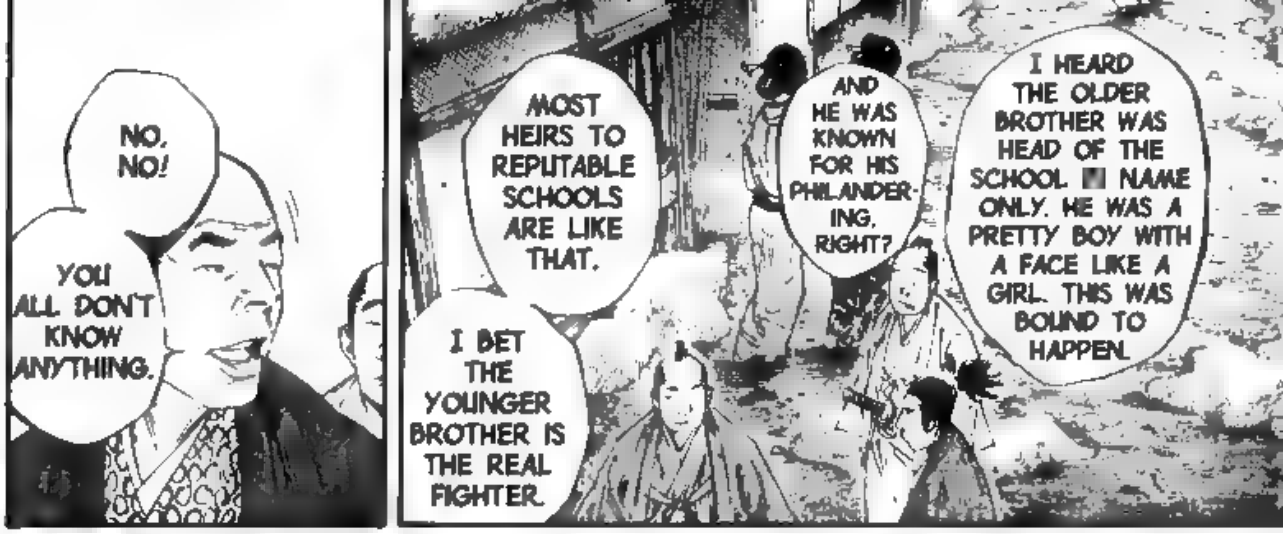


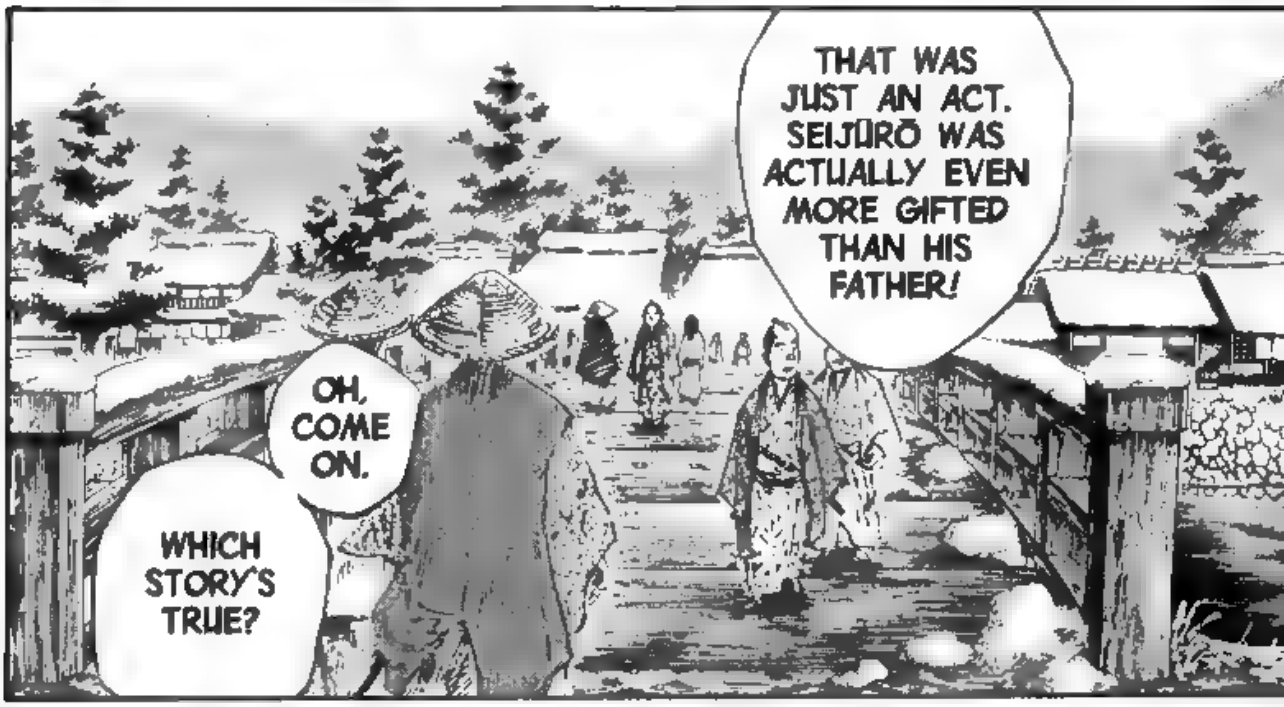
#192

Kōetsu and Myōshū

THE TENTH YEAR OF THE KEICHŌ ERA BEGAN.

THE RONIN, MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!!
YOU MEAN, MUSASHI?!
THAT'S RIGHT.
MRRMRR...
THE ONE EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT.
THAT RONIN.
YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ'S BEEN CUT DOWN!!
MRRMRR...
WHAT?!
THAT CAN'T BE.
WHO DID IT!?
EVEN IF MUSASHI IS MAKING A NAME FOR HIMSELF, HE'S JUST A RONIN.
SEIJŪRŌ WAS THE MASTER OF THE SCHOOL.
THE YOSHIOKA WOULDN'T DARE ADMIT THE TRUTH.
I HEARD SEIJŪRŌ DIED FROM AN ILLNESS.
WAIT...
SOMETHING INCURABLE.
YOU FOOL, THAT'S A LIE.
THE YOSHIOKA AREN'T GOING TO JUST LET THIS GO.
SO HE KILLED THE OLDER BROTHER, THE HEAD OF THE CLAN, FIRST!
THAT'S THE GUY WHO WAS SUPPOSED TO FIGHT THE YOUNGER BROTHER DENSHICHIRŌ...
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
MUSASHI...


NO, NO!
YOU ALL DON'T KNOW ANYTHING.
MOST HEIRS TO REPUTABLE SCHOOLS ARE LIKE THAT.
I BET THE YOUNGER BROTHER IS THE REAL FIGHTER.
AND HE WAS KNOWN FOR HIS PHILANDERING, RIGHT?
I HEARD THE OLDER BROTHER WAS HEAD OF THE SCHOOL [redacted] NAME ONLY. HE WAS A PRETTY BOY WITH A FACE LIKE A GIRL. THIS WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN.

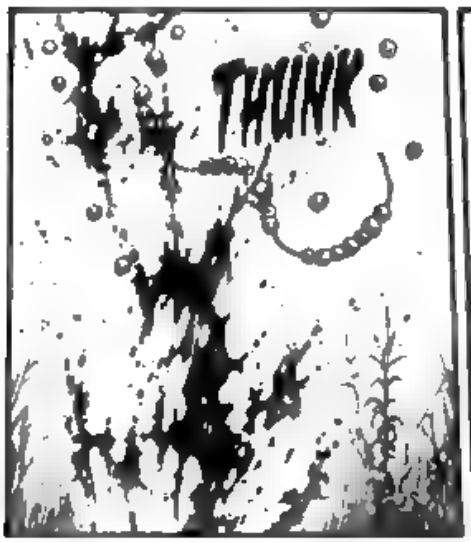


ONE RUMOR BROUGHT ON ANOTHER, AND THEN...

MUSASHI!
KRICH
HMPH
WHAT A NUISANCE WHEN THE YEAR'S JUST BEGUN.
I HOPE THEY DONT HURT ANY BY-STANDERS.
OH, NO...
GASP.
WHERE'S MUSASHI ?!
THUNK
THUNK

I'M GOING TO FIGHT MUSASHI!!
YOU CAN'T HIDE, RŌNIN.
COME OUT, MUSASHI!
ANYONE WHO KILLS MUSASHI WILL GAIN IMMEDIATE NOTORIETY.
I'M GOING TO GET TO HIM BEFORE ANYONE ELSE DOES.
HELL, THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL MIGHT EVEN GIVE ME A REWARD!
HA HA HA.
THAT'S A GOOD ONE!
FORGET ABOUT THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...
WHAT I WANT IS MUSASHI'S HEAD.

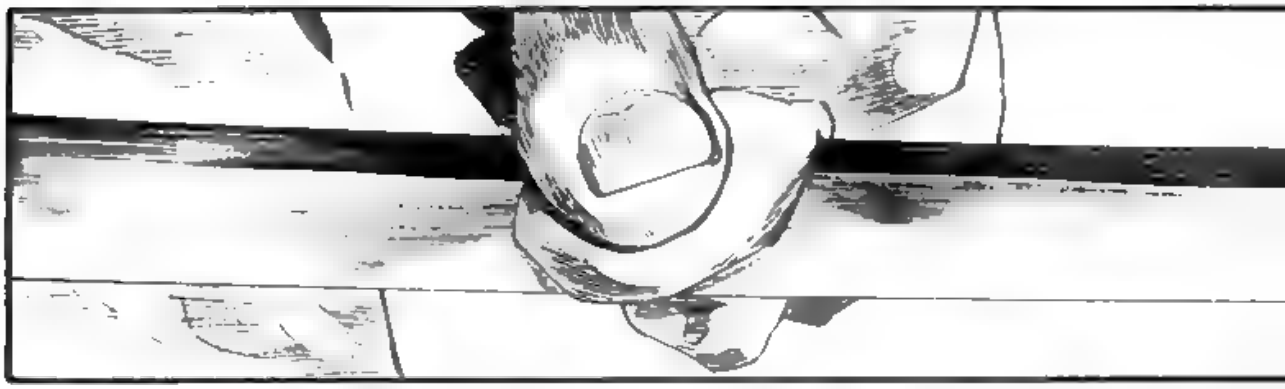
HUH?
HEY!
FICH
LET'S GO FOR A WALK.
WHAT?
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
THAT'S NOT IMPOR-TANT.
LET'S TAKE A WALK THAT WAY.


THUNK

HE GOT CUT DOWN ...!!

.....

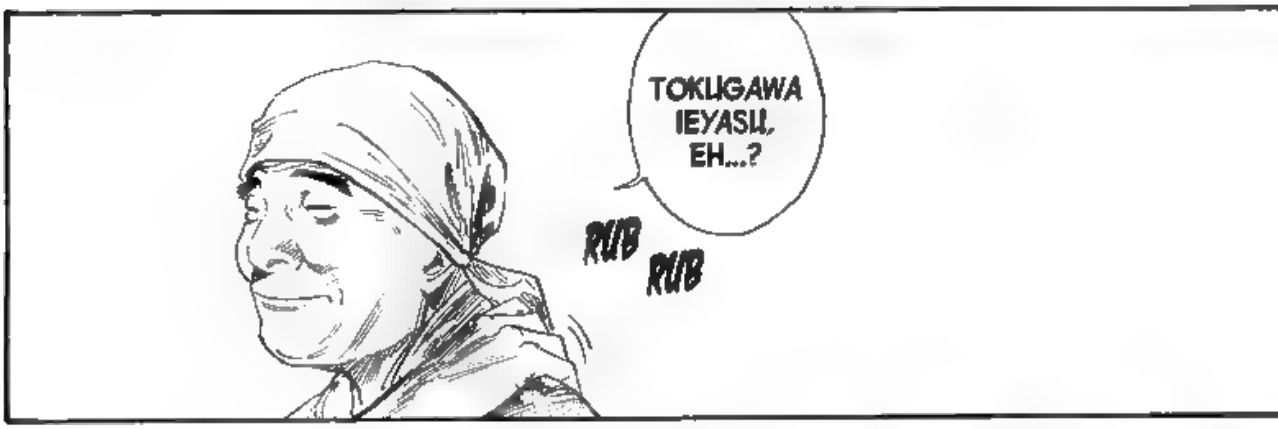
I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO KILL THIS RŌNIN I ENCOUNTERED.
I AM MIIKE JŪRŌZAEMON, ONE OF THE TEN SWORDSMEN OF THE YOSHIOKA.
DO YOU UNDER-STAND?
WE HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF THIS MATTER IMMEDIATELY.
THP
SO WHAT WERE YOU SAYING ABOUT THE YOSHIOKA ?
HUF
HUF
HUF
FICH
FICH
OTHERWISE, WE'LL BE THE LAUGHING STOCK OF THE ENTIRE CITY.

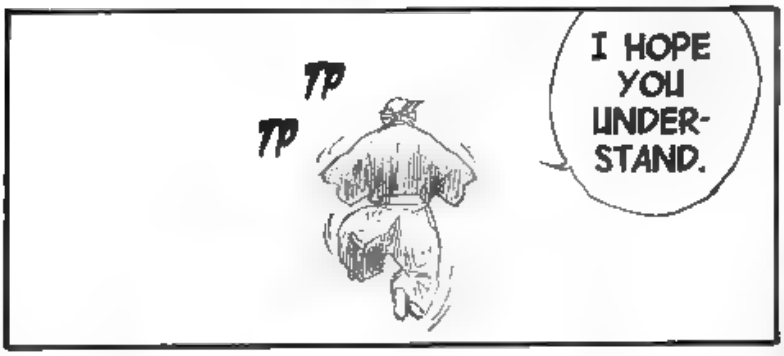


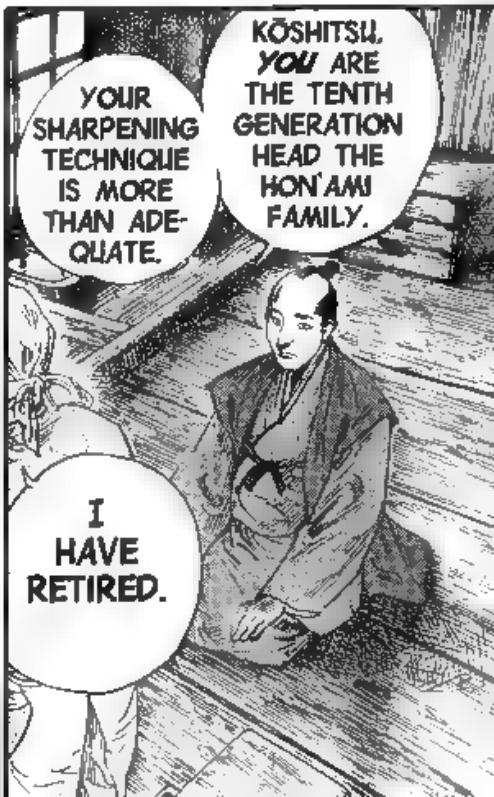
THAT'S QUITE A LONG BLADE.
HM?
OH, KŌSHITSU.
MAY I SEE IT?
SURE.
HM... WELL...
BEAUTIFUL...
FEW COULD WIELD A SWORD LIKE THIS.
WHO OWNS IT?
THERE'S A SWORD SHARPENING REQUEST FROM EDO.
STRAIGHT FROM TOKUGAWA. IT WOULD SERVE YOU WELL TO RECEIVE HIS PATRONAGE.
THE HON'AMI FAMILY WILL BE SECURE.

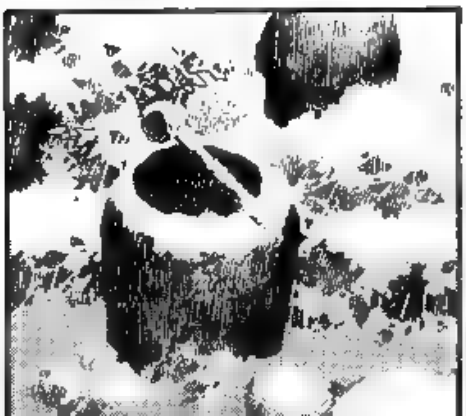
A DIRECT ORDER FROM THE TOKUGAWA IEYASU.
"HAVE HON'AMI KŌETSU SHARPEN IT."

HE SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED THAT YOU DO IT...


TOKUGAWA IEYASU, EH...?
RUB RUB

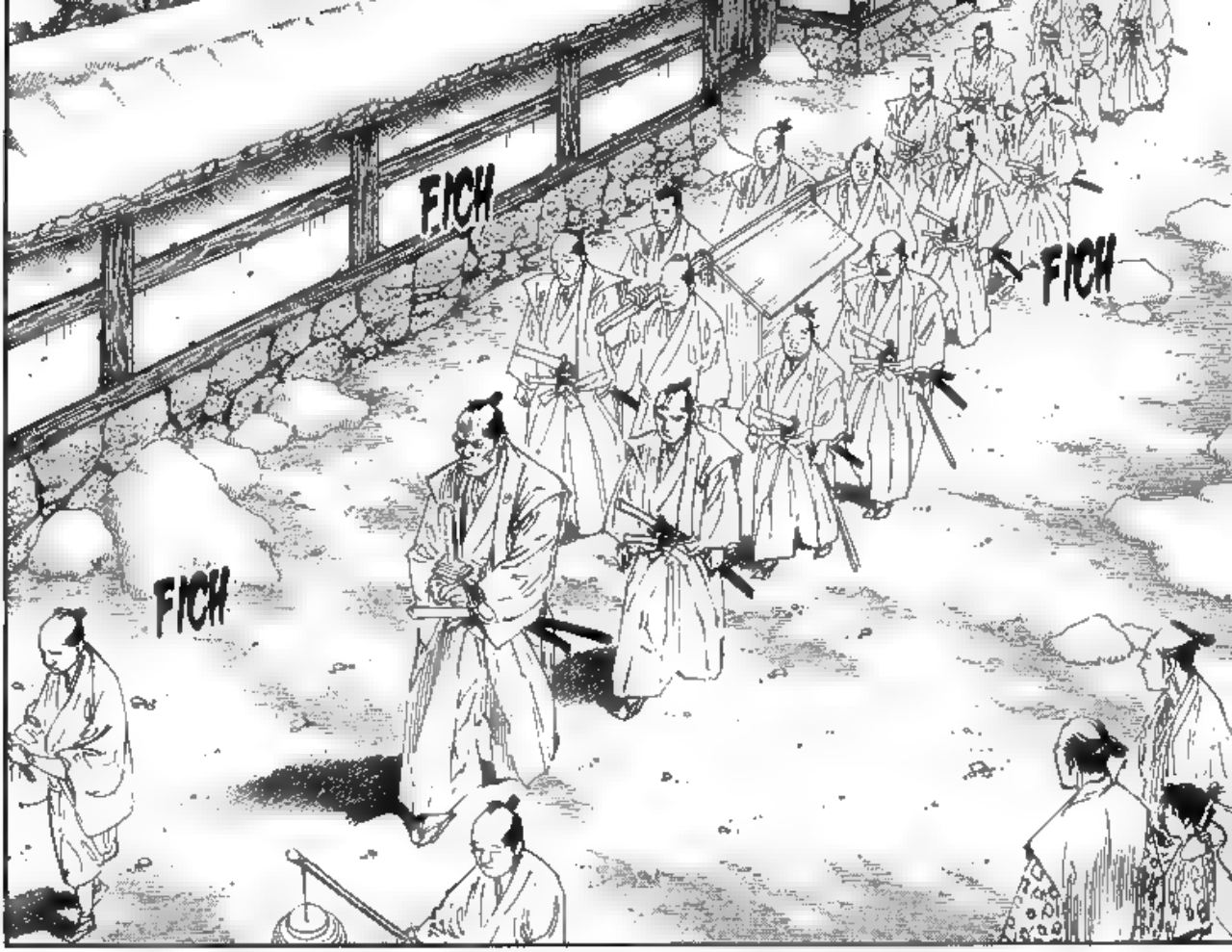

I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND.
TP TP

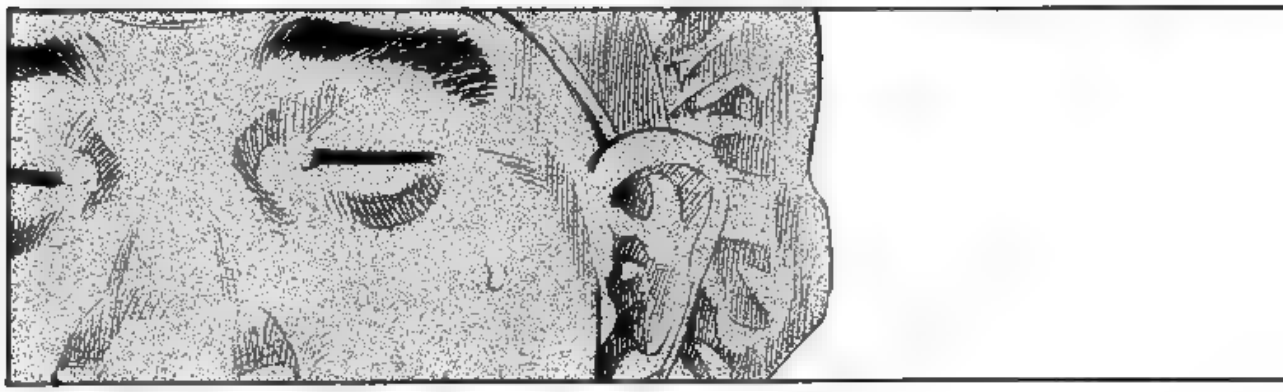

KŌSHITSU, YOU ARE THE TENTH GENERATION HEAD THE HON'AMI FAMILY.
YOUR SHARPENING TECHNIQUE IS MORE THAN ADEQUATE.
I HAVE RETIRED.



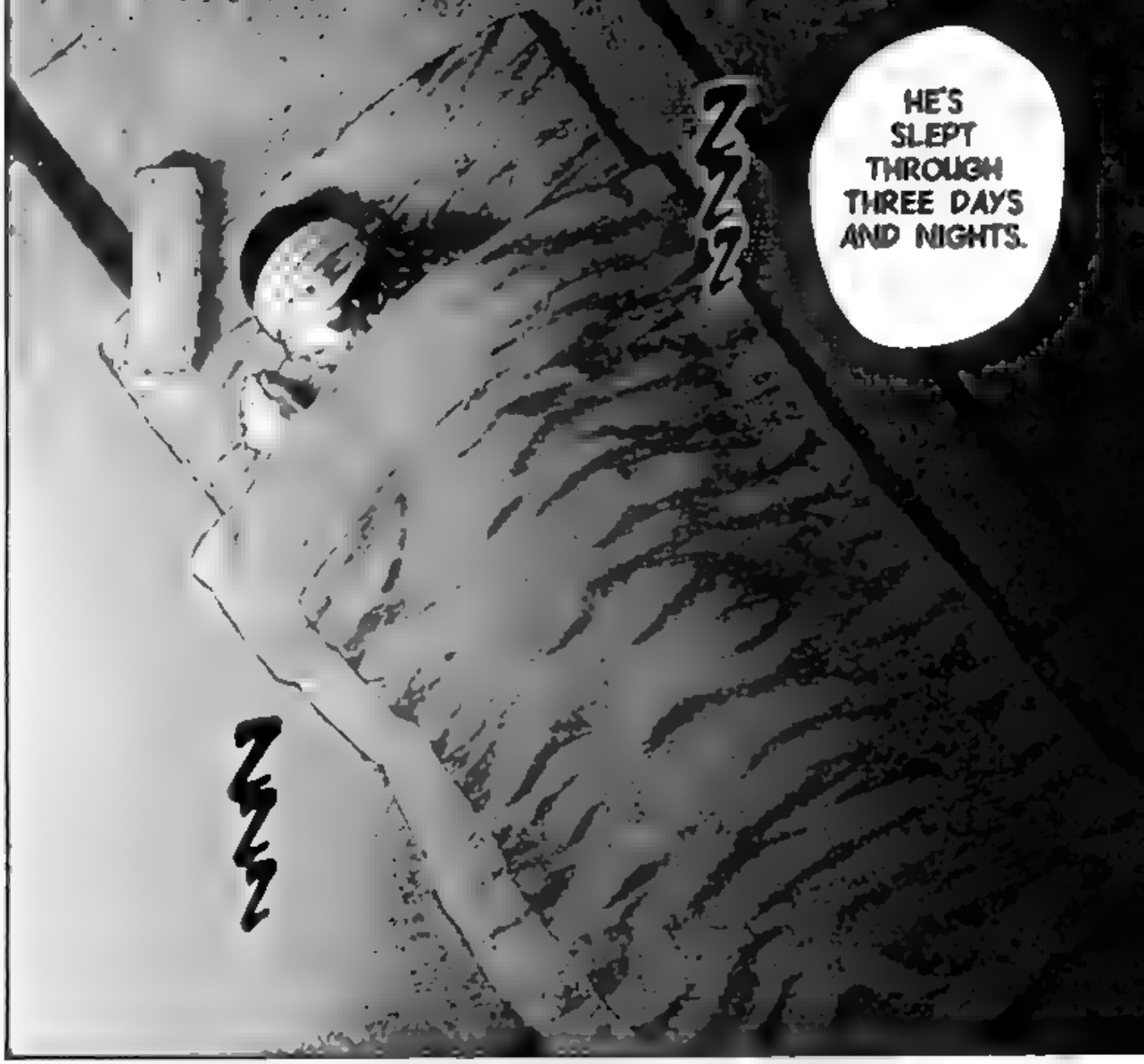
HE RAN AWAY.

THANKS TO THIS SNOW...
...THIS NEW YEAR IS BEAUTIFUL AND SERENE.
KŌETSU.
KŌETSU.
YES, MOTHER.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? HAVEN'T YOU GONE OUT TODAY?
NO...
WHAT'S WRONG ?
HOW ODD TO SEE YOU SO AGITATED, MOTHER.
THE HEAD OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL HAS PASSED AWAY.


F!CH
F!CH
F!CH



YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ...
SO IT WAS TRUE.
...
WHICH MEANS THAT YOUNG MAN IS MIYAMOTO MUSASHI.
I HAVEN'T SEEN YOUR GUEST. HOW IS HE?
VERY QUIET.

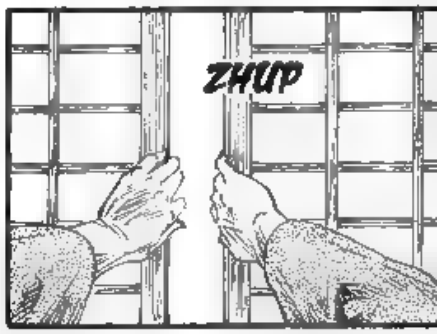

HE'S SLEPT THROUGH THREE DAYS AND NIGHTS.
ZZZ
ZZZ

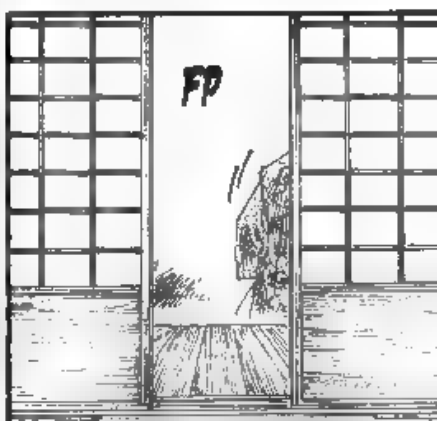
THEY'RE LOOKING TO KILL MUSASHI TO MAKE A NAME FOR THEMSELVES.
THE TOWN IS RIFE WITH BLOOD-THIRSTY THUGS.
THE YOSHIOKA DISCIPLES MIGHT ALSO COME AFTER MUSASHI.
THEY WILL EVENTUALLY COME HERE TO SEEK HIM OUT.

OH MY.
A BEAST RECOVERING FROM ITS WOUNDS.

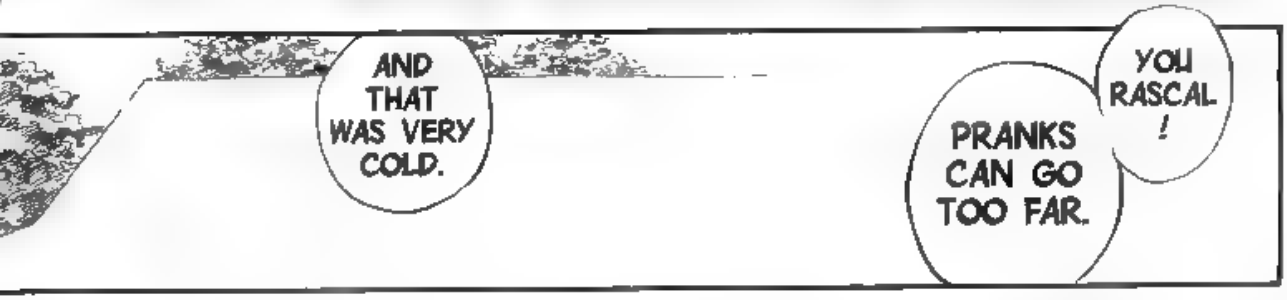
AND WE'LL PRETEND WE DON'T KNOW A THING.
INDEED.
...!!

(SNOW)

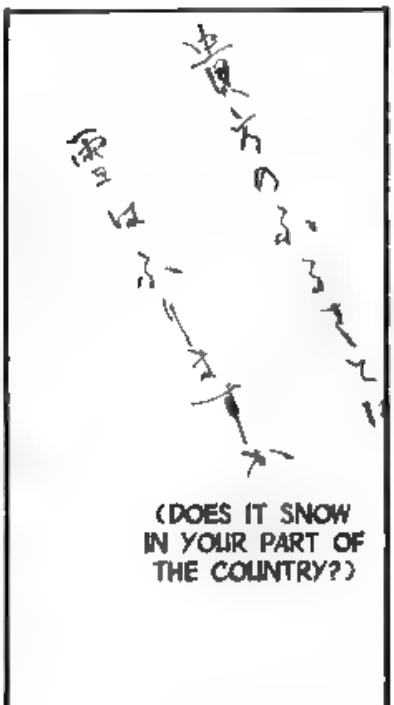




FWIP
OH MY!


AND THAT WAS VERY COLD.
PRANKS CAN GO TOO FAR.
YOU RASCAL!

.....


(DOES IT SNOW IN YOUR PART OF THE COUNTRY?)

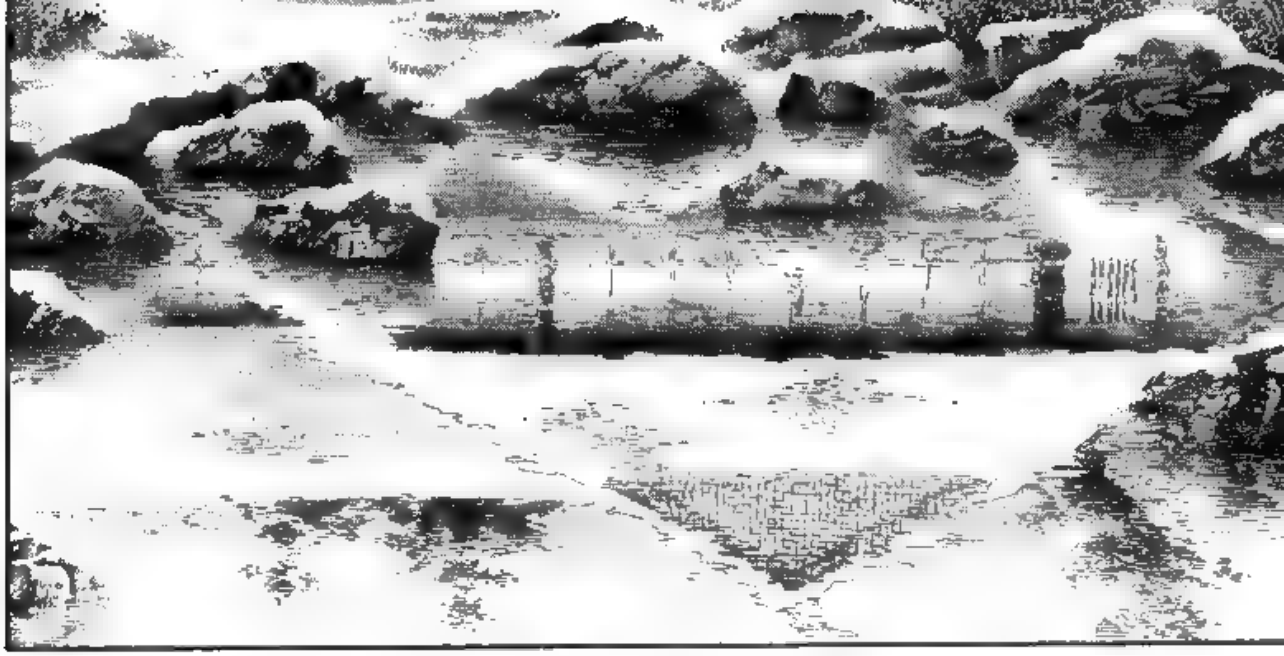
SNIF
SNIF

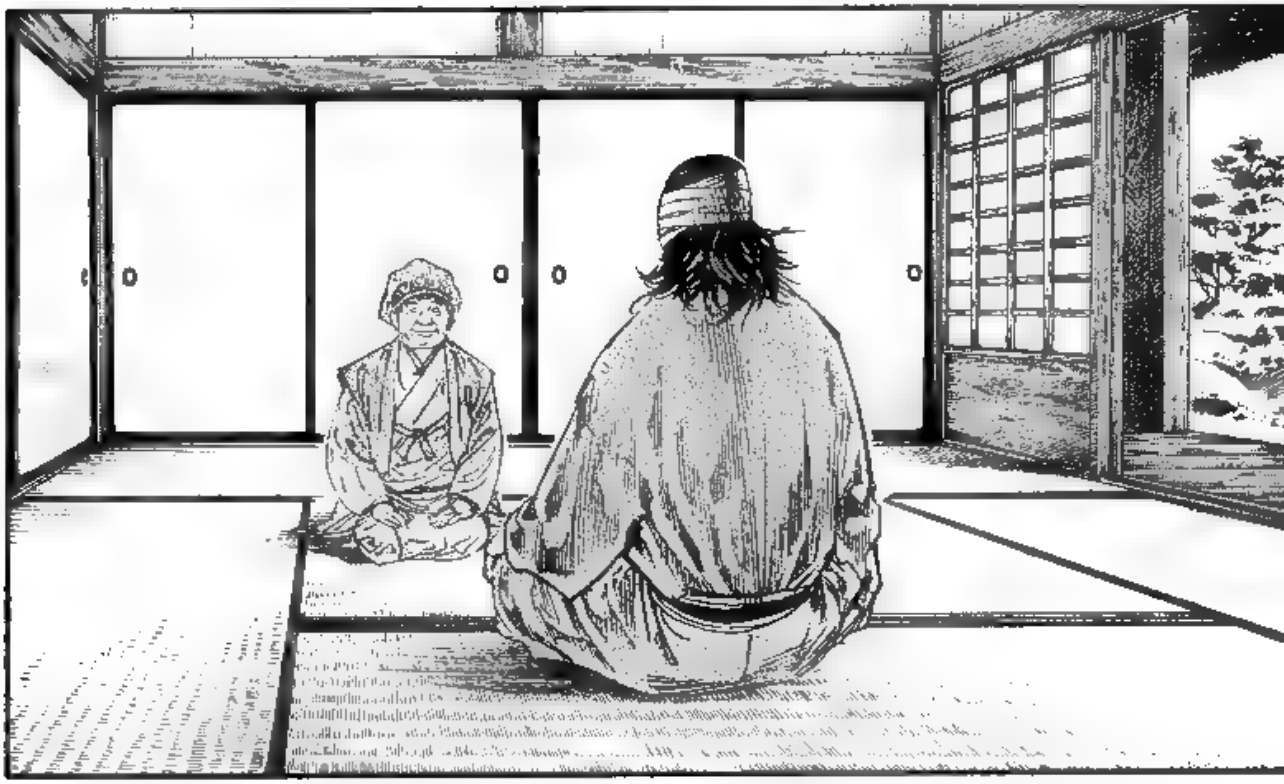
(VERY VERY VERY MUCH.)

Vagabond

(Aish!)
(Hometown)

#193 | Bedlam in Kyoto





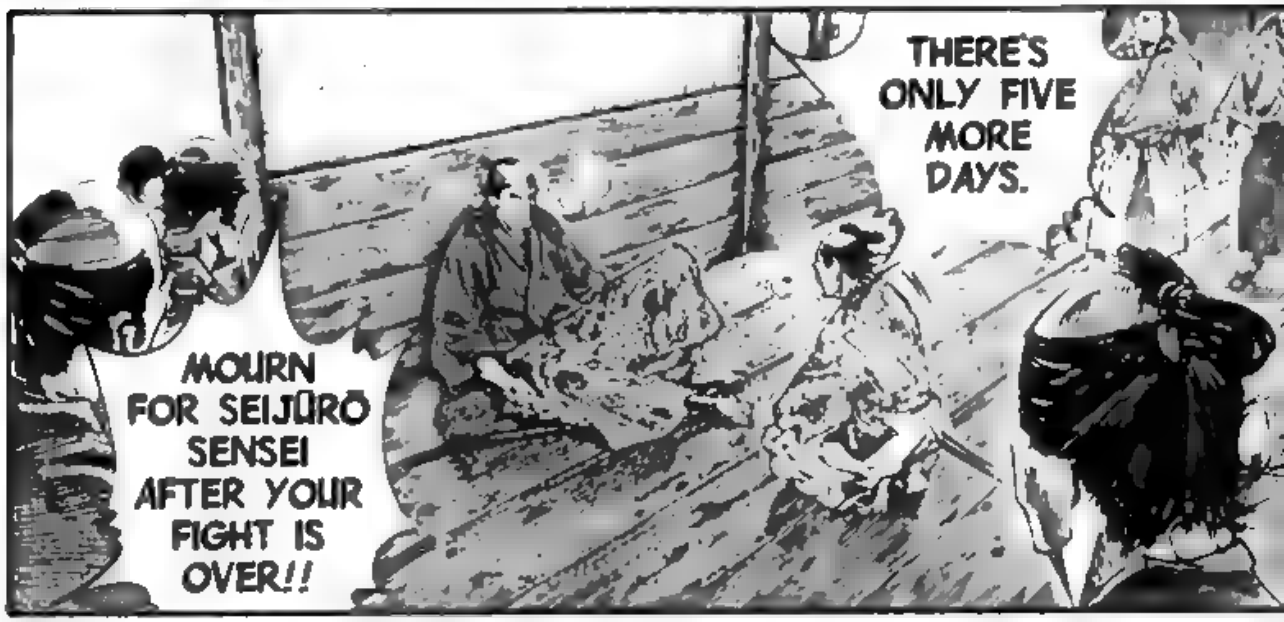
GLANCE
I'D LIKE TO REPAY YOU. BUT I'M ONLY AN ERRANT SAMURAI WITH HARDLY ANY POSSESIONS.
FP
I THANK YOU FOR THAT.
YOU NOT ONLY PUT ME UP, BUT YOU ALSO TREATED MY WOUNDS ...
HOW ARE YOUR INJURIES?
I'VE NEVER MET SOMEONE WHO COULD SLEEP FOR SO LONG.

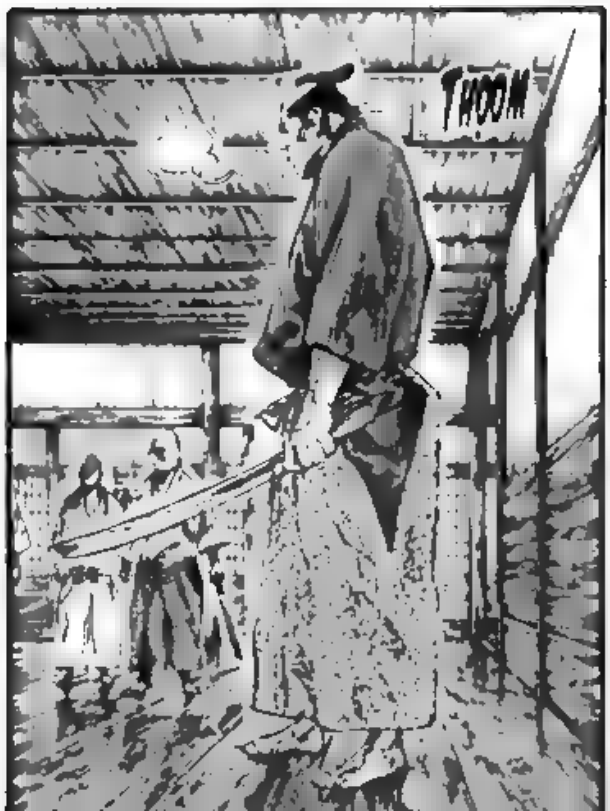
YOU'D PROBABLY BE BETTER OFF STAYING HERE A WHILE.
I HADN'T PLANNED ON STAYING HERE SO LONG...
SORRY.
.....
...
GLANCE
HMMM
...?
YOU ARE THE TALK OF THE TOWN.
THERE ARE MANY RUFFIANS OUT THERE WHO'D LIKE TO MEET YOU.
IT SEEMS YOU HAVE QUITE A SCORE TO SETTLE WITH THE YOSHI-OKA.
ISN'T THAT SO, MIYAMOTO MUSASHI?

YAHH!!
COME ON!
THWAK
KLAK
YAHH!

YAH!
FP
THUD
I SUR-RENDER.

DEN-
SHICHIRŌ
SENSEI
!!
NO.
THAT
WON'T
DO!!


THERE'S
ONLY FIVE
MORE
DAYS.
MOURN
FOR SEIJŪRŌ
SENSEI
AFTER YOUR
FIGHT IS
OVER!!


THOOM

YES.

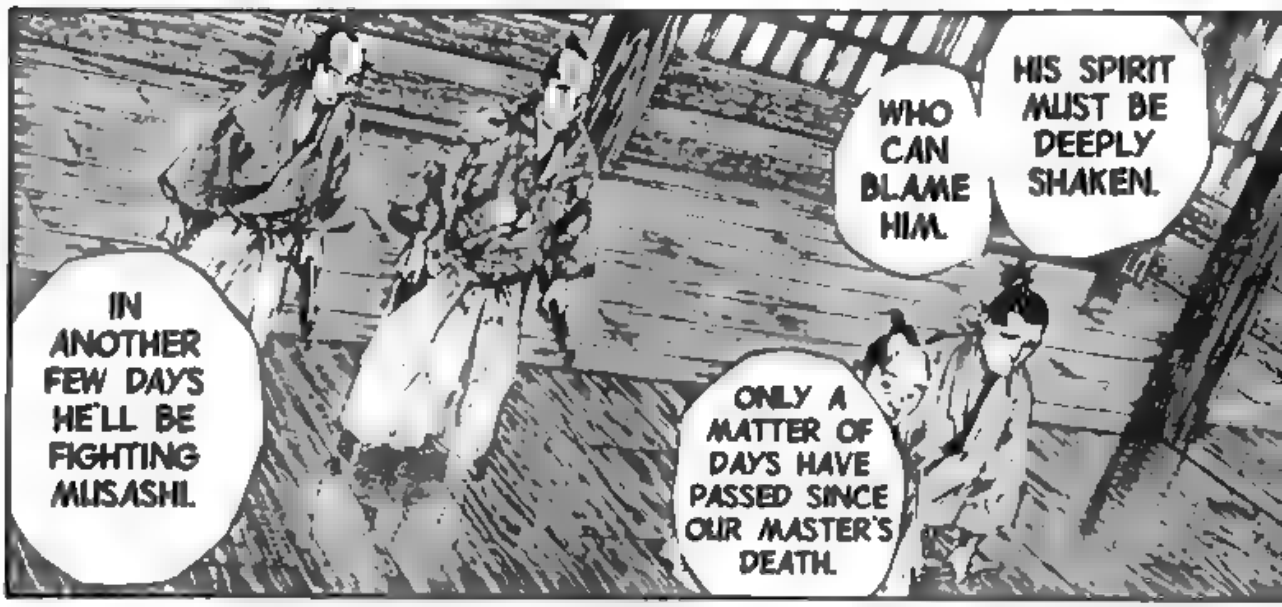
AVENGE
YOUR
BROTHER'S
DEATH!
KILL
THAT
CURSED
RŌNIN
MUSASHI
...!!

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I INTEND TO DO.
YES...
FSH
NOW THEN...
ZWIP
TAWAK
TAWAK
TAWAK
!!

HUF
.....
HUF

HUF
HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
I'M IMPRESSED, HORIKAWA.

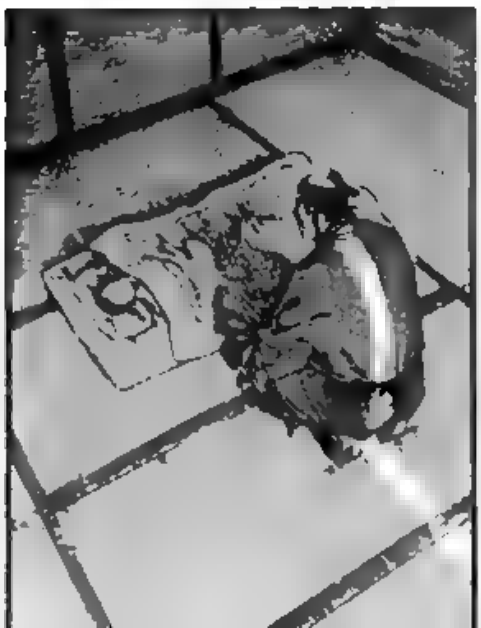

IN ANOTHER FEW DAYS HE'LL BE FIGHTING MUSASHI.
ONLY A MATTER OF DAYS HAVE PASSED SINCE OUR MASTER'S DEATH.
WHO CAN BLAME HIM.
HIS SPIRIT MUST BE DEEPLY SHAKEN.

UEDA ...
WE MUST--

I DOUBT HE CAN ENDURE THIS SITUATION.

HUF
HUF
WHAT'S ALL THAT WHISPERING ABOUT?!
YE-YES SIR...!
!!
ZWIP
COME, MIKE!!
HUF
HUF
IT'S YOUR TURN!!
ANOTHER ROUND !!
HUF
HUF
HUF

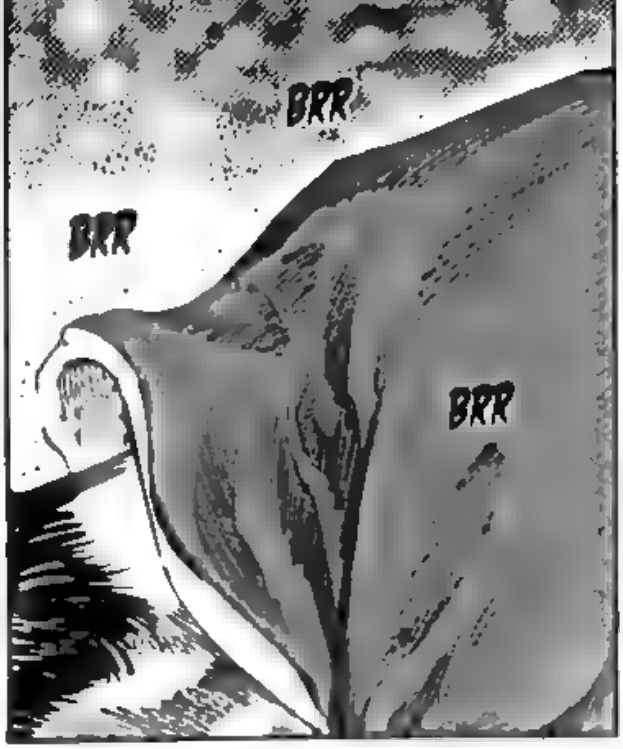
WELCOME HOME.



I SEE.

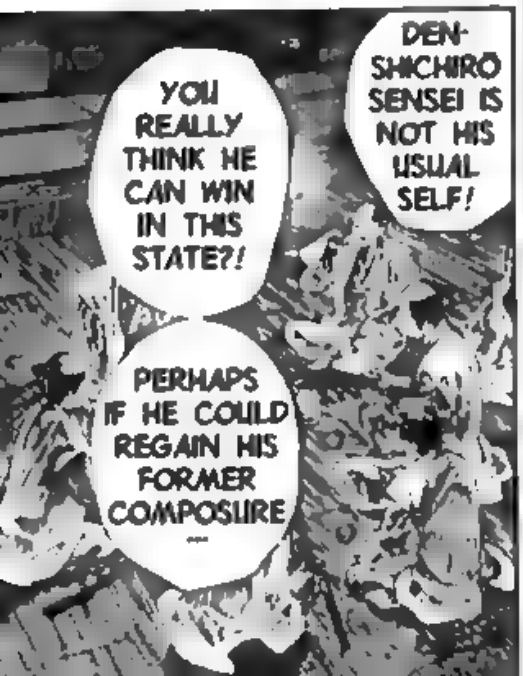
WHERE'S YAE?
SLEEP-ING.

SOUND ASLEEP ---
FP


BRR
BRR
BRR

ALL EYES ARE ON US.
THAT'S EXACTLY WHY WE MUST ACT!

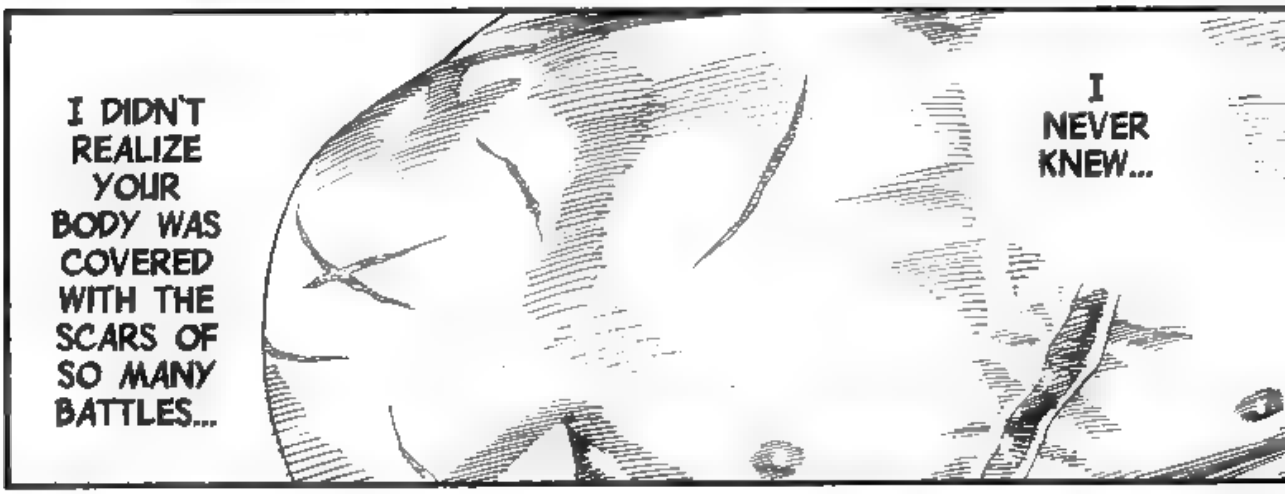
WE MUSTN'T RUSH INTO THIS.

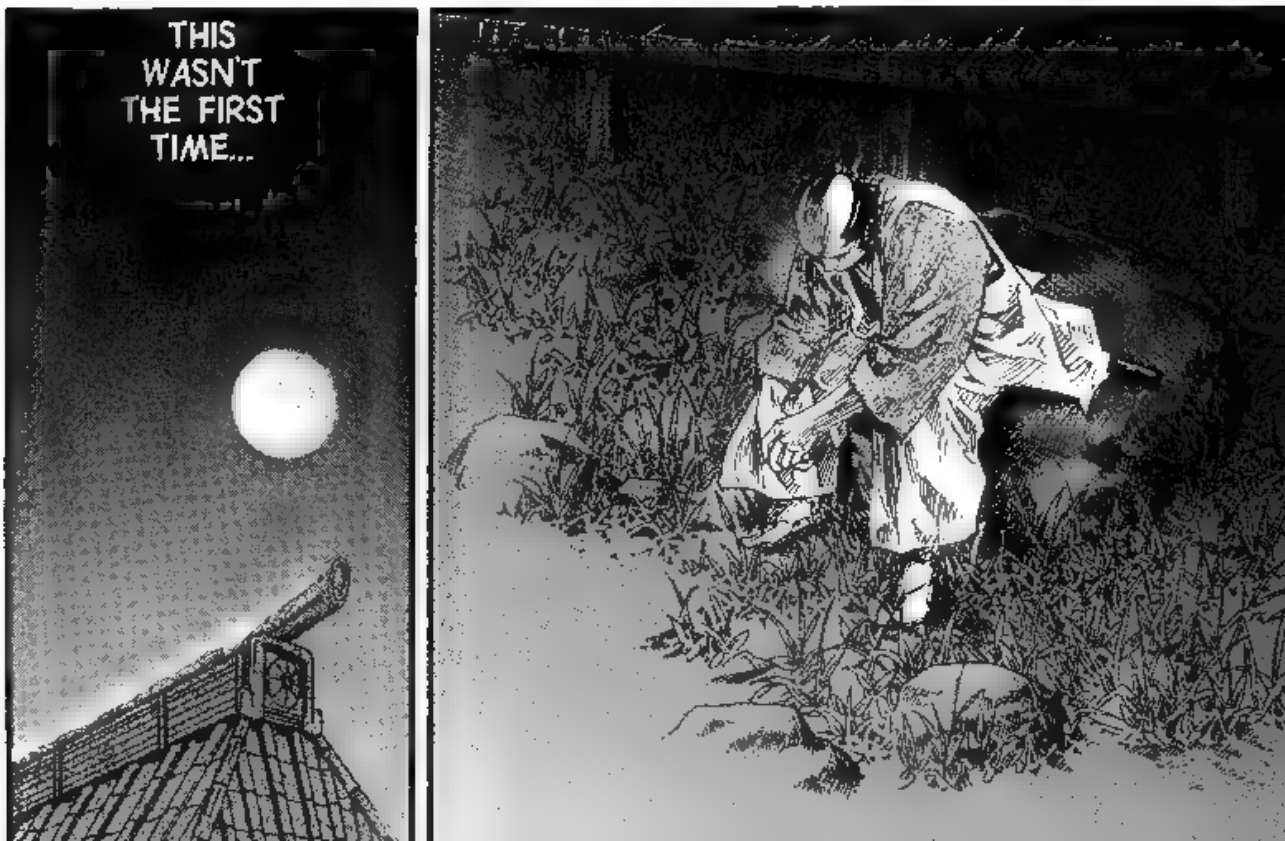

DEN-SHICHIRO SENSEI IS NOT HIS USUAL SELF!
YOU REALLY THINK HE CAN WIN IN THIS STATE?!
PERHAPS IF HE COULD REGAIN HIS FORMER COMPOSURE...

WE MUST CONSIDER THE PROSPECT OF MUSASHI DEFEATING *BOTH* BROTHERS...
IF THAT HAPPENS, OUR SCHOOL WILL BE FINISHED!!
WHAT ARE YOU SUGGESTING WE SHOULD DO?
DO YOU SUGGEST WE AMBUSH MUSASHI?
THAT WOULD BE FINE!!
WE CANNOT.
WHY NOT?!
WE PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED THAT THE MASTER DIED FROM AN ILLNESS.
EVEN IF WE SUCCEEDED IN AMBUSHING MUSASHI...
...BY DOING SO WE'D NOT ONLY BE ADMITTING HE KILLED OUR MASTER...
...BUT ALSO THAT DENSHICHIRŌ WAS NO MATCH AGAINST HIM.
YES... EVERYONE WOULD KNOW WE FEARED FOR THE OUTCOME OF THE DUEL.

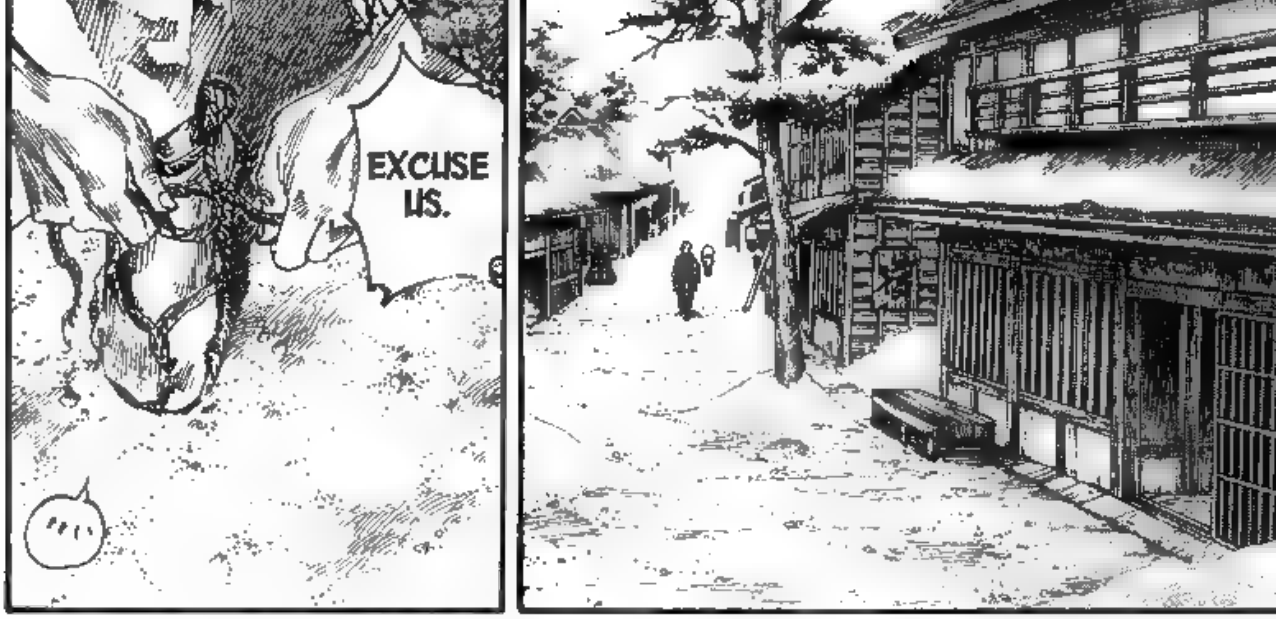
IN ANY CASE...
ARE YOU SAYING WE SHOULD LET THE DUEL TAKE PLACE?!
THEN WHAT SHALL WE DO?
YES SIR!!
SEARCH ALL THE INNS IN KYOTO.
IT WOULDN'T HURT TO KNOW MUSASHI'S WHEREABOUTS.
SEIJŪRŌ...
YOU THOUGHT DENSHICHIRŌ COULDN'T BEAT MUSASHI...
I SEE...

THAT'S WHY YOU TRIED TO KILL HIM WHERE NO ONE WOULD KNOW.

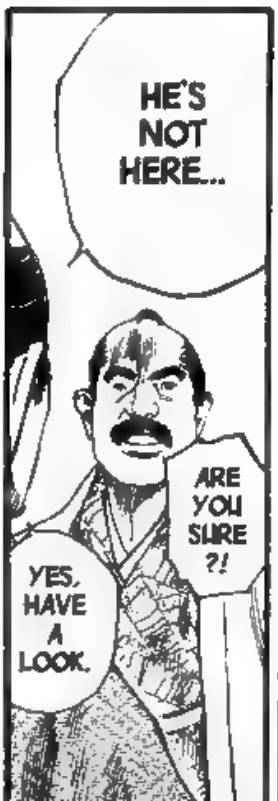

I DIDN'T REALIZE YOUR BODY WAS COVERED WITH THE SCARS OF SO MANY BATTLES...
I NEVER KNEW...


THIS WASN'T THE FIRST TIME...

YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING AFTER YOUR BROTHER FOR QUITE A WHILE.
CLENCH


EXCUSE US.

?!


HE'S NOT HERE...
ARE YOU SURE ?!
YES. HAVE A LOOK.

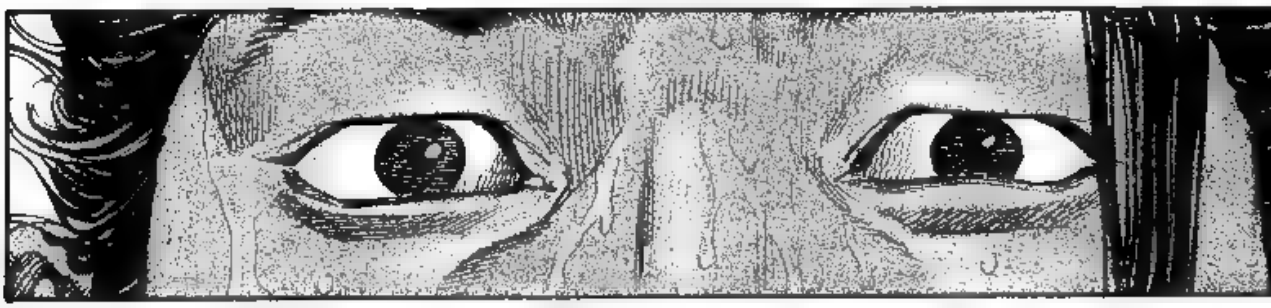
N-NO! ARE THEY STILL SEARCHING...
...FOR THE ARSONIST WHO LIT THEIR SCHOOL ON FIRE A YEAR AGO?

THAT WAS ME!!

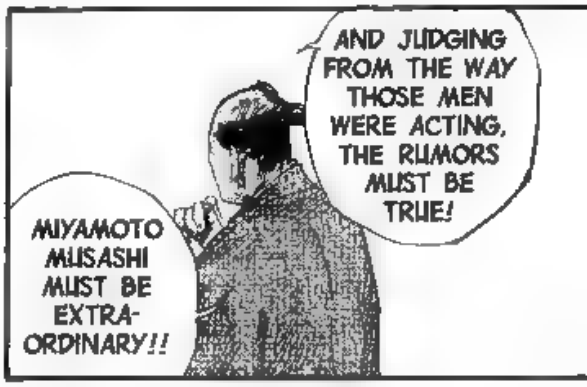
WE'RE FROM THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.
WE NEED TO GO OVER YOUR GUEST BOOK.
...!!

AMBUSH ?
DAMN, HE'S NOT AT ANY OF THE INNS IN KYOTO.
THERE'LL BE NO AMBUSHING HIM THEN.
WE WON'T FIND HIM IF HE HAS ANY FAMILY HERE.
DAMN IT!!
YES, SIR.
REPORT TO US IMMEDIATELY IF YOU SEE HIM
UNDER-STAND ?!
...?
MY NAME IS SASAKI...
WHAT'S WRONG? WHY ARE THOSE YOSHI-OKA GUYS SO RILED UP?
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?
IT'S THE TALK OF THE TOWN.

MUSASHI CUT DOWN SEIJŪRŌ...?
THE HEAD OF THE YOSHIOKA ?!



HOW FAR ARE YOU GOING TO GO?!

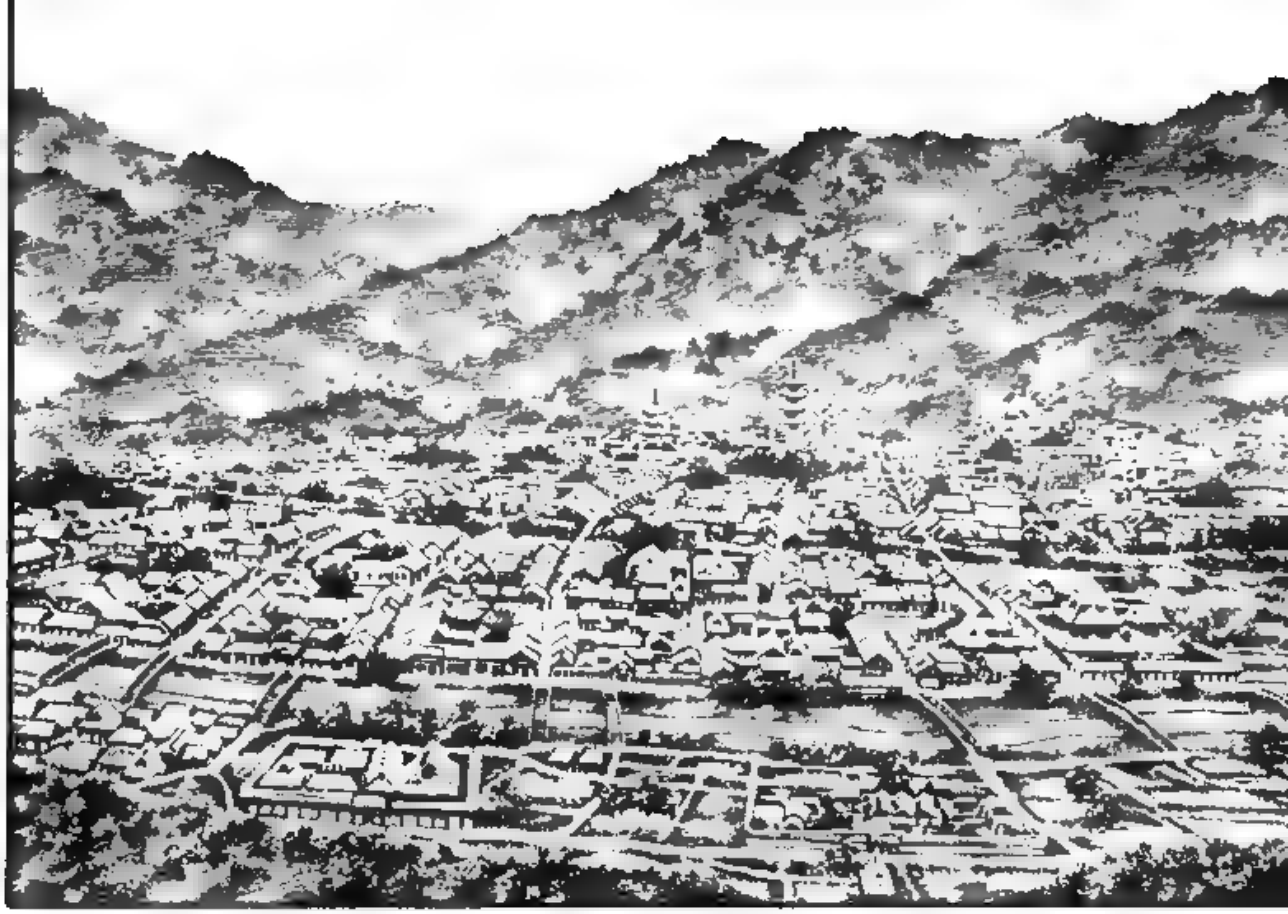

AND JUDGING FROM THE WAY THOSE MEN WERE ACTING, THE RUMORS MUST BE TRUE!
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI MUST BE EXTRA-ORDINARY!!

HOW FAR...

Vagabond

(I'm somebody too!)

#194 Talk of the Town



MY MASTER IS AWESOME!!

WOW, WOW, WOW!!

LOWER YOUR VOICE JŌTARŌ.

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE HEARD THIS RUMOR...

...ABOUT *MY* MASTER.

I WANT TO TELL EVERYONE!
HE'S MY MASTER!!
YOU BETTER NOT.
UNLESS YOU WANT TO ENDANGER US.
HE ACTUALLY CUT DOWN YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ!
CUT HIM DOWN!
BRR
BRR
BRR
IT GIVES ME THE SHIVERS.
I JUST WANT TO, OKAY?
I KNOW!
TAKEZŌ ...

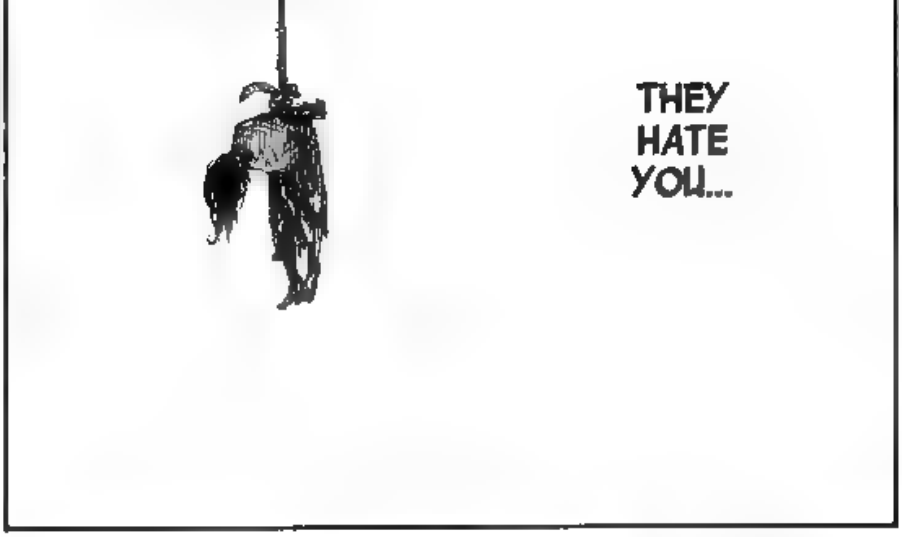
NAH
NAH
PLISSH
...
FWP
FWP
TAKEZŌ
!
OH!
SPLISSH

HM...
RIGHT ?
YOU PUT IT IN YOUR MOUTH AFTER YOU CAUGHT IT...
DID YOU CATCH THAT WITH YOUR MOUTH?!
PLOOSH
OH, COME ON!
SPLISH
CAUGHT IT WITH MY MOUTH.
USED MY MOUTH.
FWP FWP
YOU'RE LYING!
FLP
WHY'D I THINK ABOUT THAT MEMORY ?
HEY, LOOK! ANOTHER ONE!
TAKEZŌ...

(I'LL KILL YOU, YOU BASTARD MIYAMOTO MUSASHI. MIHARA UMACHIYONOSUKE)

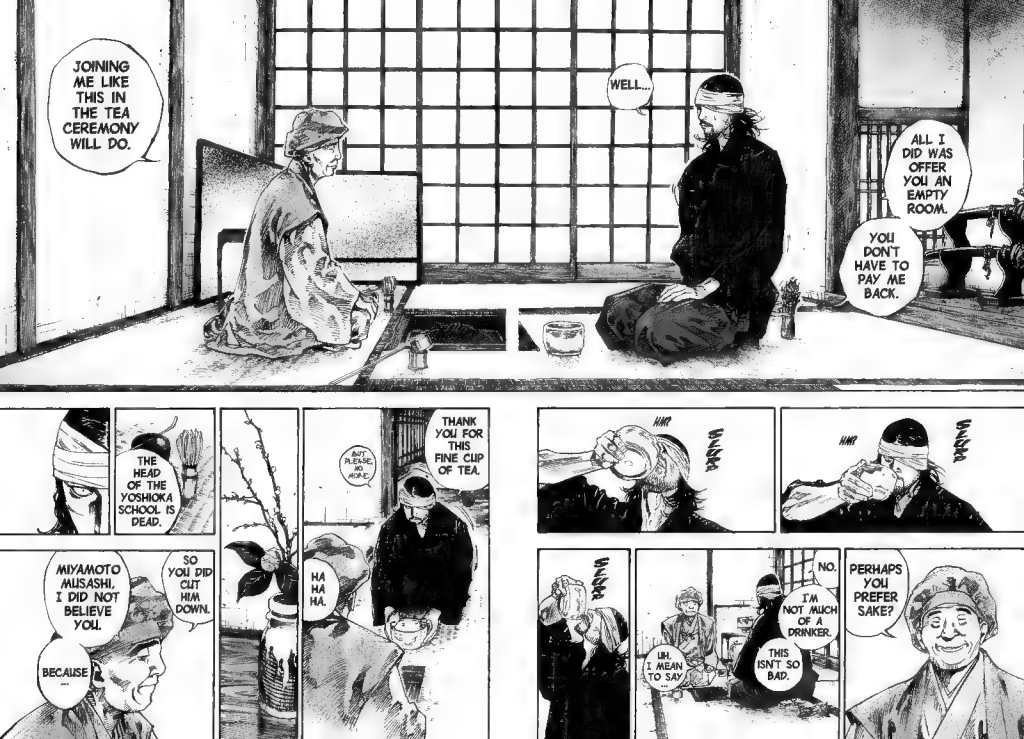
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D EVER EVEN LEAVE MIYAMOTO VILLAGE.
I NEVER IMAGINED I WOULD BE WALKING THROUGH THE CITY OF KYOTO LIKE THIS...
HM?

DESPITE
IT
ALL...


THEY
HATE
YOU...

...YOU
STILL
PERSIST
ON
YOUR
QUEST.

NO
MATTER
HOW
NARROW
THE
PATH...
...YOU
STILL
FORGE
AHEAD.


JOINING ME LIKE THIS IN THE TEA CEREMONY WILL DO.
WELL...
ALL I DID WAS OFFER YOU AN EMPTY ROOM.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY ME BACK.
THE HEAD OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL IS DEAD.
THANK YOU FOR THIS FINE CUP OF TEA.
BUT PLEASE NO MORE.
HA HA HA.
SO YOU DID CUT HIM DOWN.
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, I DID NOT BELIEVE YOU.
BECAUSE ...
HMM
SLURP
HMM
SLURP
SLURP
NO.
I'M NOT MUCH OF A DRINKER.
UH, I MEAN TO SAY...
THIS ISN'T SO BAD.
PERHAPS YOU PREFER SAKE?

...WHEN WE FIRST MET...
...YOU HAD ONLY JUST EXCHANGED BLOWS...
...WITH SUCH A FORMIDABLE FIGHTER...
YET YOU SEEMED QUITE SERENE.
YOU WIPED OFF YOUR BLOOD...
...AS IF WIPING OFF SWEAT FROM A HARD DAY'S WORK.
I DID, HOWEVER, DETECT AN UNUSUAL RESONANCE COMING FROM YOUR SWORD.
IS THAT SO?
.....

...
GO AHEAD.
MAY I TAKE A LOOK AT IT?
FP
NO INSCRIP-TION YET...
HMM...
...YOU SEEM SO ADEPT AT HANDLING A SWORD.
ODD ...

!!

.....

HA HA. I FELT LIKE I'D BEEN CUT.
HA HA HA.

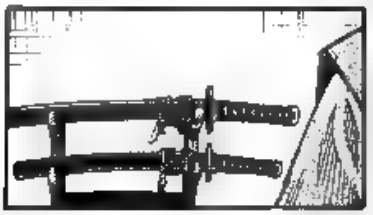
?

.....

I'M RETIRED NOW.

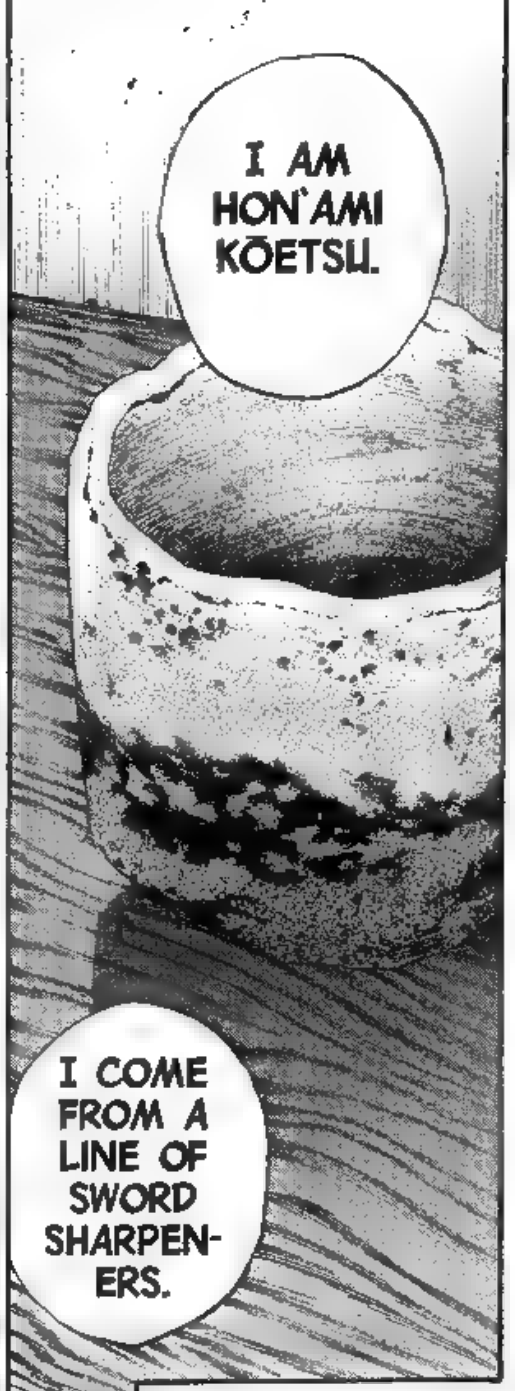
THANK YOU.

MUSASHI...



THE TERRIFIC AURA OF A NAKED BLADE.
IT FELT SO STRONG, I THOUGHT MY HAND MIGHT BE LOPPED OFF AT ANY MOMENT.
...I DID FEEL A BRIEF MOMENT OF BLOODTHIRST WHEN I MET YOU.

IT'S EMBARRASSING, BUT I MUST CONFESS...


I AM HON'AMI KŌETSU.
I COME FROM A LINE OF SWORD SHARPENERS.

SO THAT'S WHY...

...IT MADE ME WANT TO WATCH YOU IN A FIGHT.
I'M SURE IT WOULD BE A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT TO BEHOLD.

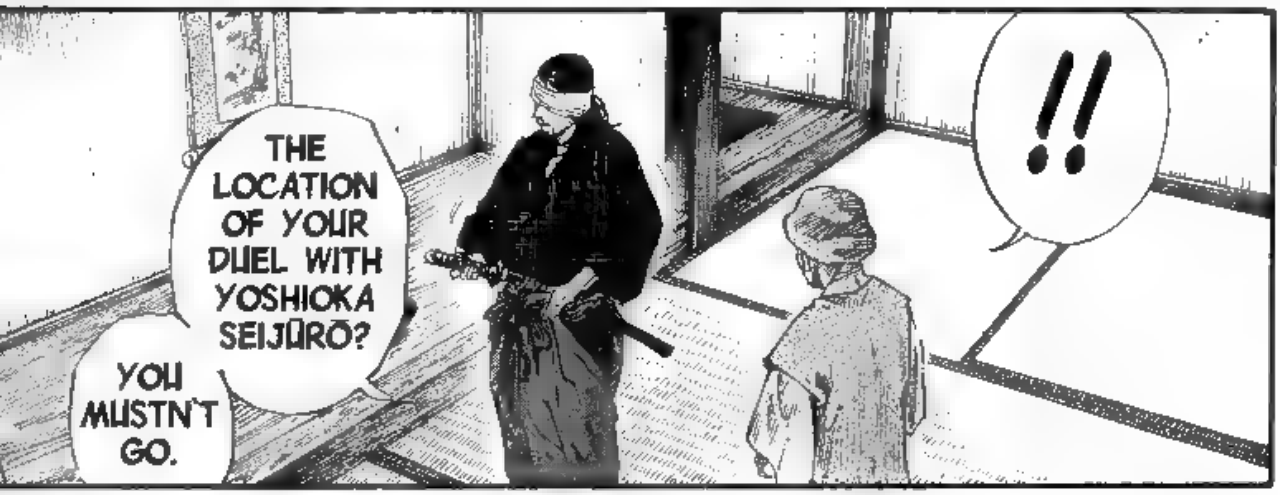
I MUST EXCUSE MYSELF.
HM? WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

HA HA HA.
IT IS EMBARRASSING.

...

MAYBE HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT.

THERE'S A PLACE CALLED RENGEŌIN TEMPLE.
I WANT TO HAVE A LOOK AT IT.


!!
THE LOCATION OF YOUR DUEL WITH YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ?
YOU MUSTN'T GO.

..AT LEAST, NOT YET.

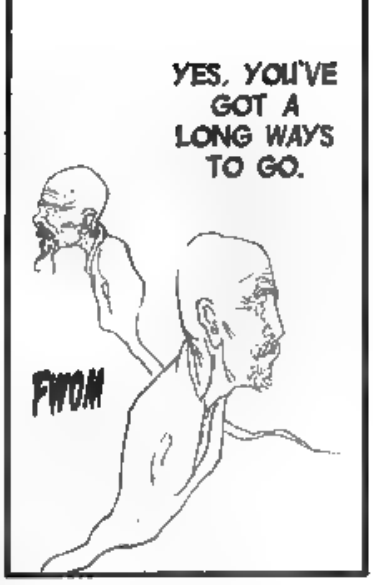
THAT'S RIGHT.

LET THEM TALK. IT DOESN'T MATTER.
I DON'T AMOUNT TO MUCH ANYWAY.

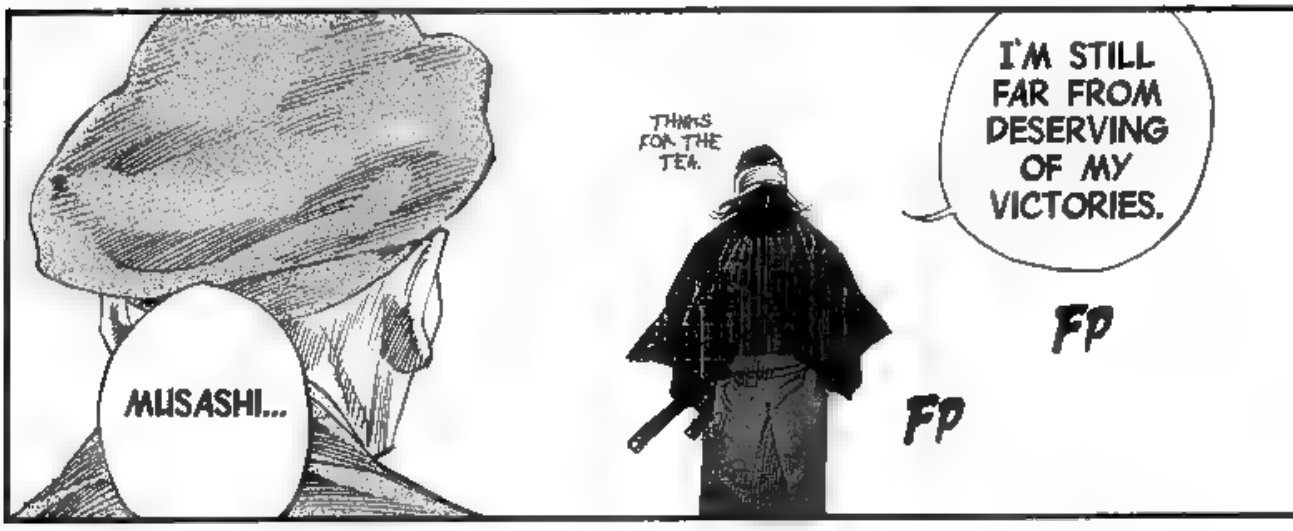
I DON'T REALLY UNDER-STAND.
?
AS I SAID, YOU'RE NOW THE TALK OF KYOTO.
OF COURSE NOT, YOU WERE SLEEPING THROUGH IT!

.....

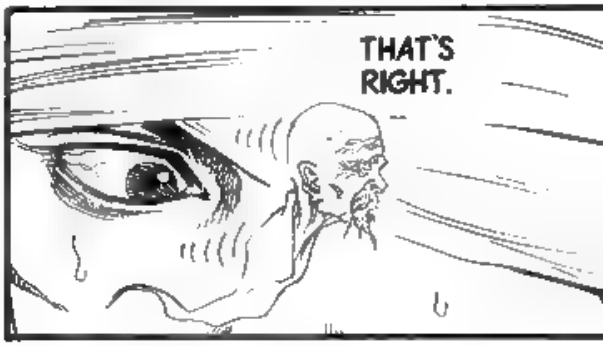
I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER HOW I WON...


YES, YOU'VE GOT A LONG WAYS TO GO.
FWOM

YOU'VE GOT A WAYS TO GO.
HRMPH


MUSASHI...
THANKS FOR THE TEA.
I'M STILL FAR FROM DESERVING OF MY VICTORIES.
FP
FP

SHUT UP!!
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP


THAT'S RIGHT.

A VERY VERY LONG WAYS.
HRMPH
FWOM
A LONG WAY TO GO.

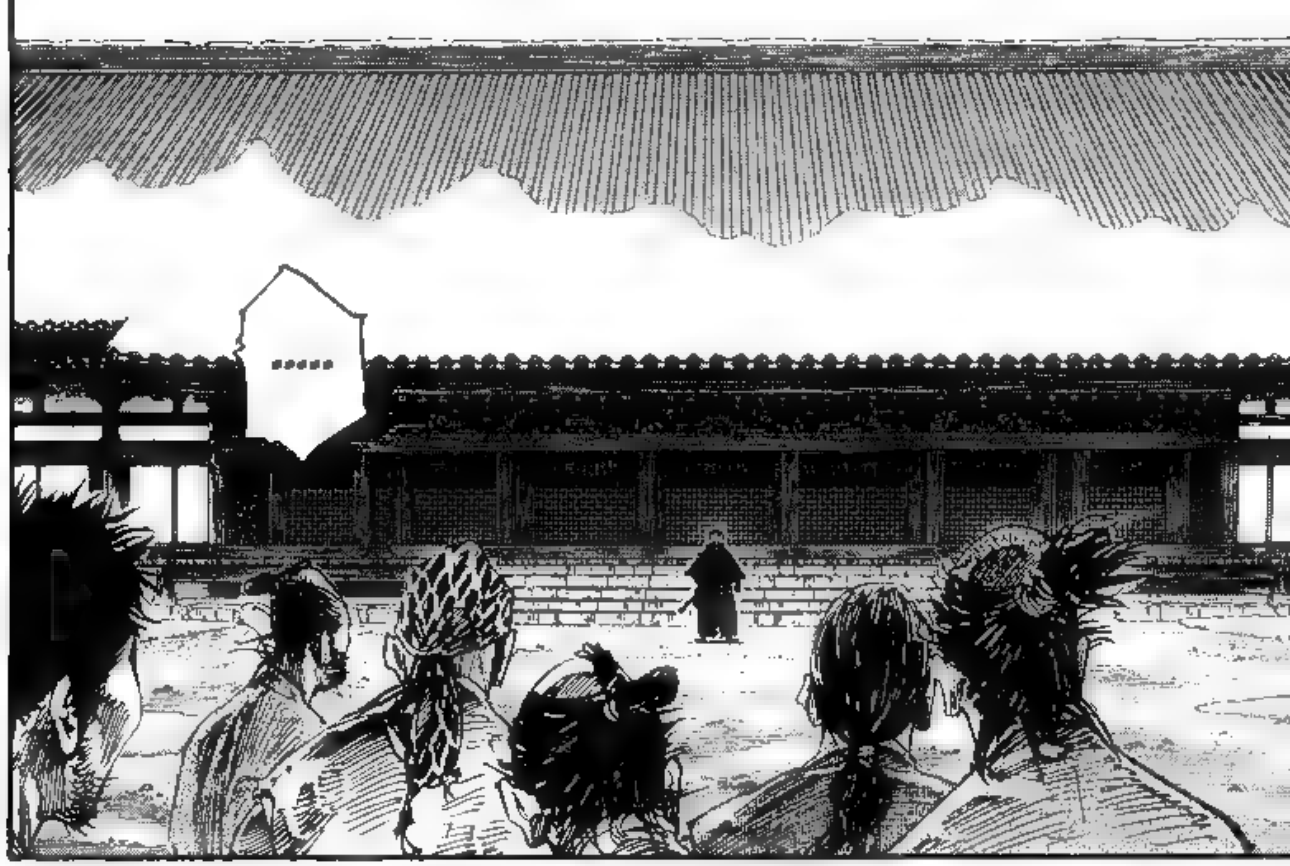
FICH
FICH
FICH

FICH
FICH
SOME-THING ODD ABOUT THAT GUY...
YEAH.
FICH
FICH
FICH
FICH
FICH

I'M NO CRIMINAL.
THERE'S NO WAY I'M GOING TO BE HOLED UP THERE UNTIL THE DAY OF THE MATCH.
FICH
FICH
BESIDES, IT'S NOT LIKE ANYONE WOULD RECOGNIZE ME.

FICH
.....
GASP
...!!
FICH
FICH
IT'S HIM!
HEY... ISN'T THAT ...?
FICH
FICH
FICH

SO THIS IS IT.


.....

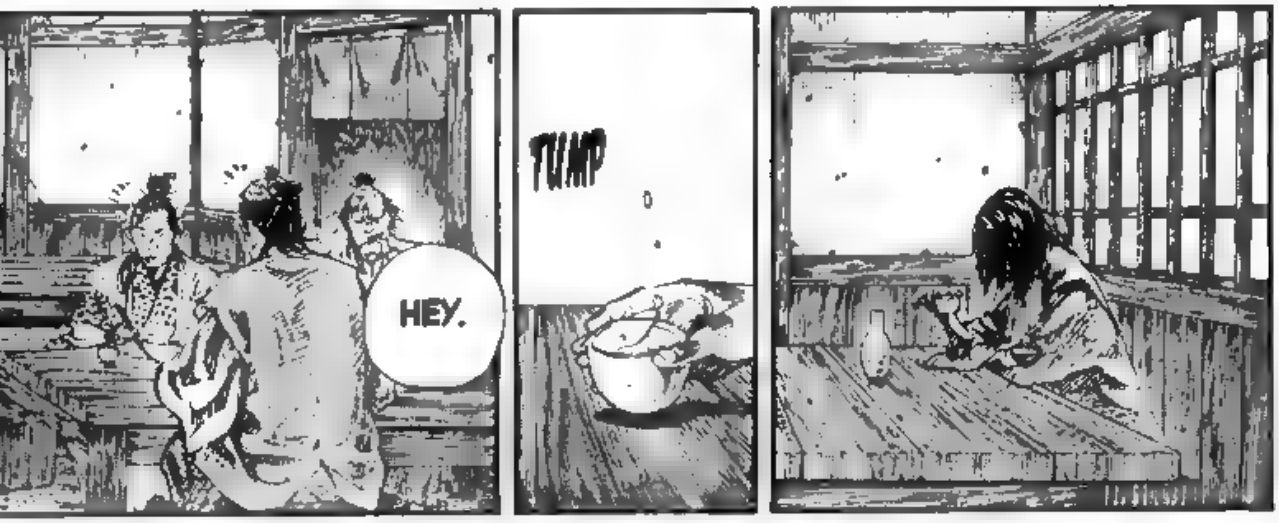
!
FIP
FSH

HM?

RENGEŌIN TEMPLE...

Vagabond

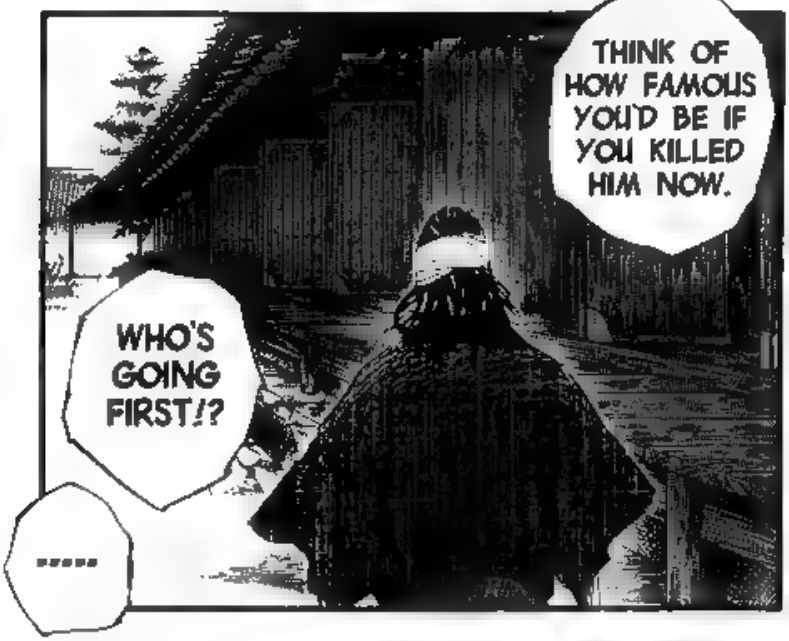
YOU'LL SEE, THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL IS GOING AFTER MUSASHI.
HM...BUT WHAT ABOUT HIS MATCH WITH DEN-SHICHIRŌ?
I DON'T KNOW. I THINK THEY'RE GOING TO SWALLOW THEIR PRIDE AND TRY TO GET RID OF MUSASHI.
AFTER ALL, THE HEAD OF THEIR SCHOOL WAS KILLED.


HEY.
TUMP

I WANT YOU TO GIVE ME THE DETAILS OF THIS STORY.

#195 Confrontation of Rivals

THIS IS WHERE THE MATCH IS SUPPOSED TO TAKE PLACE.
THAT'S GOTTA BE MUSASHI.
HE'S CHECKING THE AREA.


THINK OF HOW FAMOUS YOU'D BE IF YOU KILLED HIM NOW.
WHO'S GOING FIRST!?
.....

YES!
I SEE.
THAT BANDAGE MUST BE FROM HIS FIGHT WITH SEIJŪRŌ.
WOW!

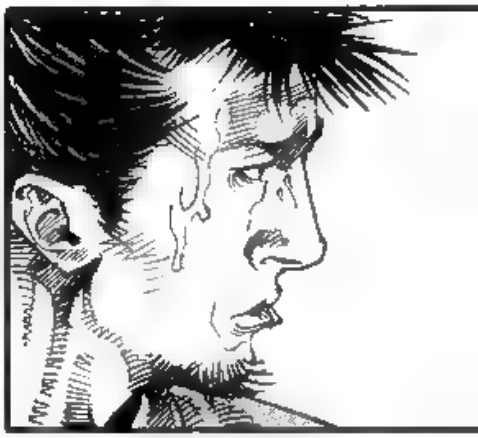
FICH
FICH

!
.....

FICH
FICH
FICH
HEY...
HEY...
DAMN YOU...
.....
FICH
FICH

FICH
...
FICH
...

HM?
HMM, A BUG...



I COULD USE ANOTHER NAP.

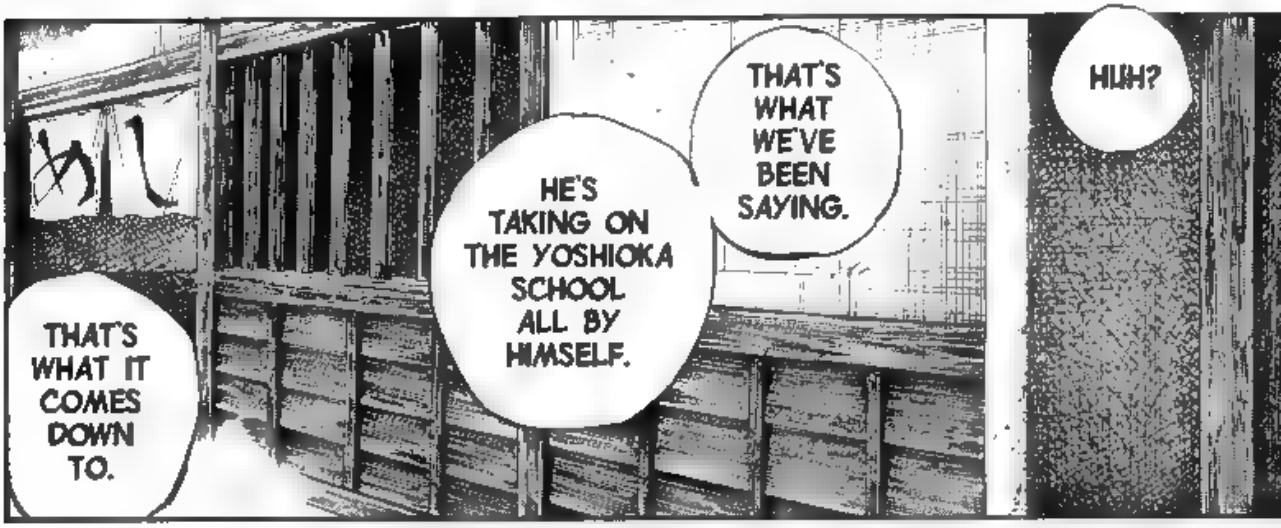
AHH...
FICH
FICH

I'M STARVING.
BUCK-WHEAT DUMP-LINGS.
RIGHT AWAY.
...BUT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE MASTER BEING KILLED, RIGHT?
HMM...
I HEARD THE YOUNGER BROTHER IS MORE FORMIDABLE.
SO HOW COULD HIS YOUNGER BROTHER DENSHICHIRŌ POSSIBLY BEAT MUSASHI?

THIS...

HUH?
SAY...

IS HE REALLY THAT STRONG?
IS HE...
THIS MIYA-MOTO MUSASHI ...


THAT'S WHAT IT COMES DOWN TO.
HE'S TAKING ON THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL ALL BY HIMSELF.
THAT'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN SAYING.
HUH?

ACTUALLY, I AM SASAKI...
HMPH.
THAT'S RIGHT! KOJIRŌ! I'VE HEARD OF HIM!
HE'S BEEN MAKING A NAME FOR HIMSELF!

SPEAKING OF STRONG FIGHTERS, WHAT ABOUT SASAKI KOJIRŌ?
.....
WHO?

HUH?
I HEAR HE'S DEAF.
...KOUJIRŌ!
THAT IS...
HA HA HA. THAT COULD GET CONFUS-ING.
HA HA HA.
YOU'VE GOT THAT RIGHT! HA HA HA...
MY NAME'S SASAKI KOUJIRŌ.
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT HIS HEARING?
SASAKI KOJIRŌ IS DEAF!?
?!
WHAT'S THIS?
HE CAN FIGHT EVEN THOUGH HE'S DEAF?
I WON'T BELIEVE IT UNTIL I SEE IT FOR MYSELF.

THIS CAN'T BE! IT MUST BE A MISTAKE.
IMPOSSIBLE! HE'S FORMIDABLE ENOUGH TO RECEIVE A CERTIFICATE!!

HM...!!
HEY!! IT'S THE YOSHIOKA !!

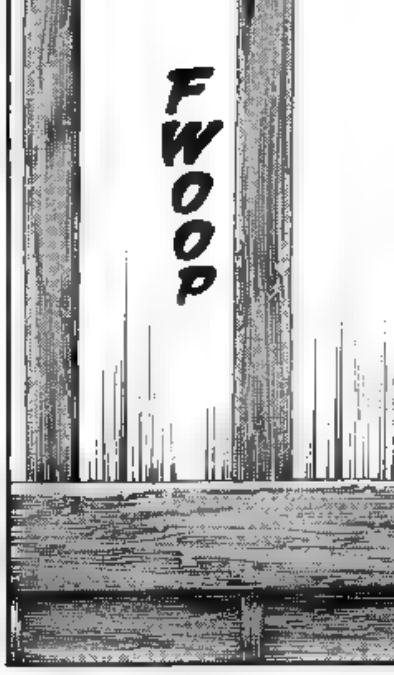
FICH
FICH

FICH
FICH

SO THE BIG ONE IS DENSHICHIRŌ ?
P- PRETTY IMPRESSIVE!
WHO SAID HE DIDN'T AMOUNT TO MUCH ?

HEY...
...YOU HAVEN'T PAID FOR YOUR FRIEND.
HUH? KOUJIRO?
WHAT?

WELL...
MUSASHI CAN'T WIN.
THAT WAS SCARY.


FWOOP

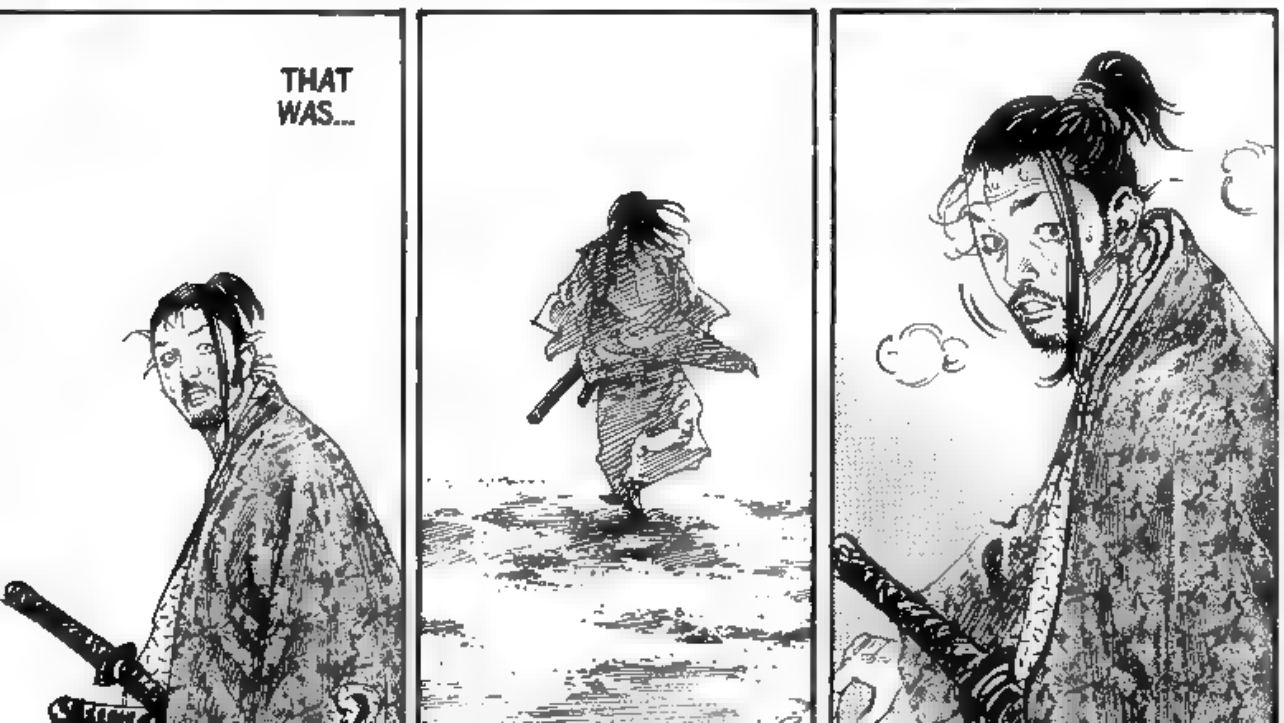
HE JUST RAN OUT THE BACK.
!!

GASP
THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A YEAR AGO...
BUT IF THEY CATCH ME THEY'LL ROAST ME ALIVE FOR ARSON!!

OF COURSE, I'VE CHANGED QUITE A BIT FROM THAT WANTED SIGN.

DENSHICHIRŌ MIGHT RECOGNIZE ME.
HUF
HUF
HUF
HE EVEN BEAT ME UP BEFORE.

I KNEW I SHOULDN'T HAVE COME HERE.
BUT THEY'LL STILL RECOGNIZE ME!!


THAT WAS...

FIGH

HMM...

F!CH

CHK
FWOOSH
NO, UEDA.

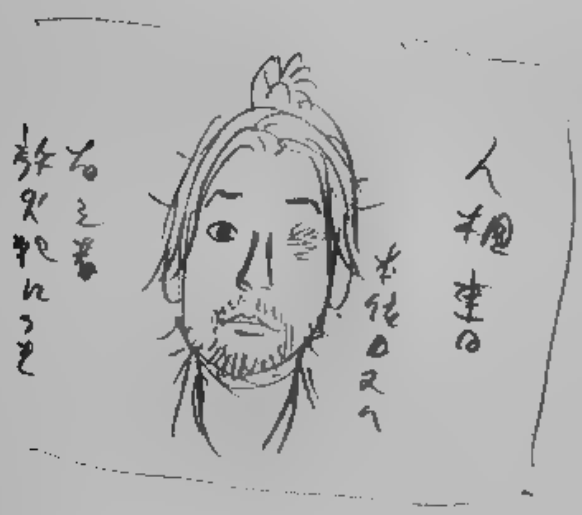
HOW WAS HE...?

HOW'D MY BROTHER FIGHT?
CAN'T YOU TELL FROM THIS BANDAGE?
YOU FOOL.

HE'S SEVERAL TIMES BETTER THAN YOU.

Vagabond

(Wanted: Hon'iden Matahachi)



#196
Return of the Vainglorious

...A MAN DRINKING ALONE IN THE BACK STOOD UP...
WHEN THEY REALLY STARTED INSULTING THE YOSHIOKA...
YOU KNOW THE RUMORS.
THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT THE YOSHIOKA...

THIS COULD BE A PROB-LEM.
SOME-ONE FROM THE YOSHI-OKA...?
HE WAS A DEMON.
BRR
BRR
BRR
THAT WAS NO MAN.

TŌJI.
I RE-MEMBER THAT NAME.
!!
FICH

DON'T WANT THEM TO KNOW THAT MY TIMING IS OFF BECAUSE I ONLY HAVE ONE GOOD EYE.
CUT HIM DOWN, DEN-SHICHIRŌ !!

FICH
NO, TŌJI!
SHFF

WELL, I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE!!
AND THEN...
IF DENSHICHIRO ATTACKS, I WON'T SEE IT COMING.
FICH'

WHOOSH

GRB

...
GLUP

YOU'RE STRONGER...
HUF
HUF
HUF

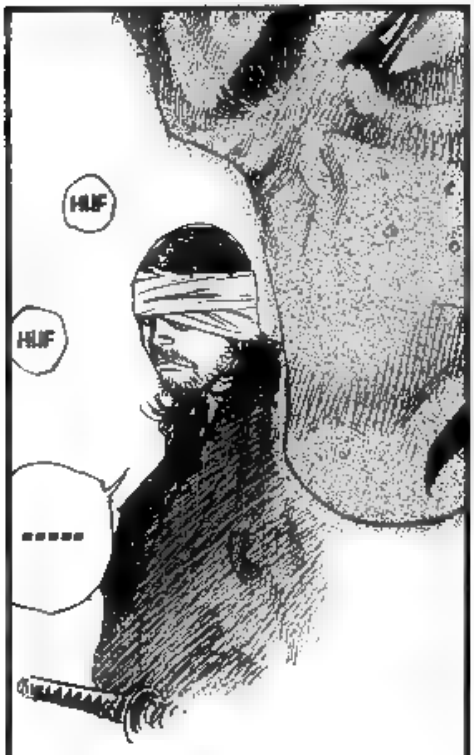
.....
...WHILE I ONLY BECAME WEAKER...
I DON'T UNDER-STAND...
HAH!

SO EVEN THE SWORD HAS FORSAKEN ME.

GION TŌJI WAS ONE OF THE TEN SWORDSMEN OF THE YOSHIOKA.
HE WAS BANISHED FROM THE SCHOOL.

BUT NEWS OF OUR MASTER'S DEATH MUST HAVE BEEN A SHOCK TO HIM.
YOU MUST UNDER-STAND.

MY APOLOGIES.
...AND GIVEN THAT THE PERPETRATOR IS NOW DEAD.
WELL, THE THREE VICTIMS WERE UNKNOWN RŌNIN.

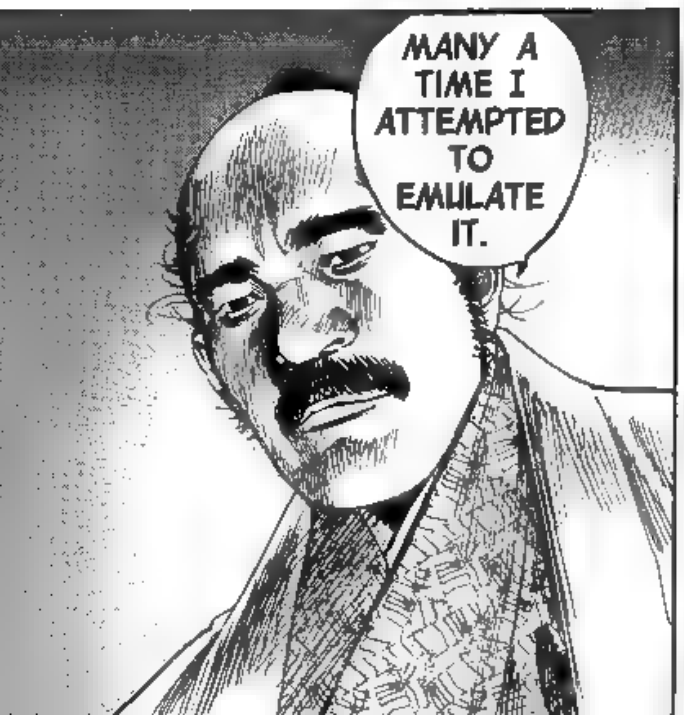

HUF
HUF
.....

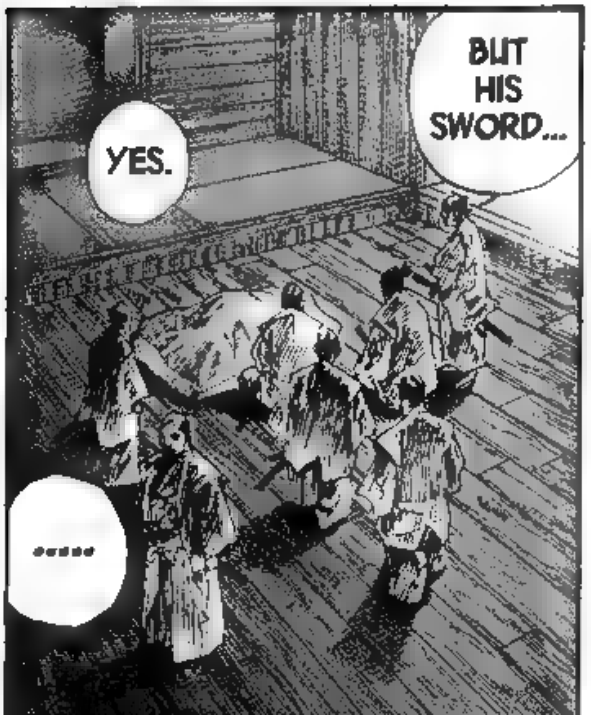
.....
...I WOULDN'T HAVE SEEN YOU COMING.
IF YOU HAD ATTACKED ME...
HUF
HUF
FICH
FICH
FICH
YOU SHOULD BE TENDING TO THE BUSINESS MATTERS OF YOUR SCHOOL.
GION TŌJI...

I JUST WENT OVER THERE.
HIS PARENTS ...
...LIVE AT THE FOOT OF MOUNT TORIBE.
DOES HE HAVE ANY FAMILY?
IS THERE ANYONE WHO'LL COME FOR THE BODY...?
NO.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
HE'S NO SON OF MINE.
.....

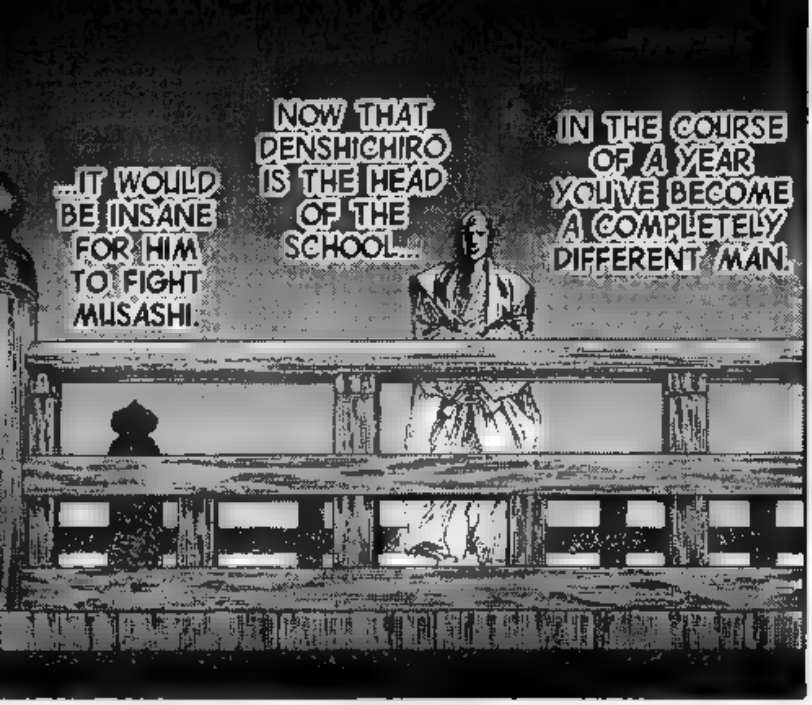
HE'S LUCKY HE EVEN HAD PARENTS.
MY FAMILY SITUATION ISN'T SO DIFFERENT.
HMPH.

I HATED THAT BASTARD...
NO ONE LIKED HIM. HE WAS FULL OF CONCEIT.
ME TOO...


MANY A TIME I ATTEMPTED TO EMULATE IT.


BUT HIS SWORD...
YES.
.....

GION TOJI...
TO COME BACK TO US IN SUCH A STATE...


...IT WOULD BE INSANE FOR HIM TO FIGHT MUSASHI.
NOW THAT DENSHICHIRŌ IS THE HEAD OF THE SCHOOL...
IN THE COURSE OF A YEAR YOU'VE BECOME A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT MAN.

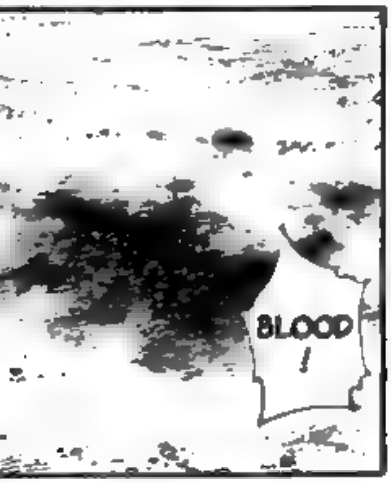
A DIFFERENT MAN...

WHY SHOULD WE PUT THE REPUTATION OF OUR SCHOOL, WITH ITS ILLUSTRIOUS HISTORY, ON THE LINE AGAINST THIS LONE RŌNIN.
MUSASHI HAS NOTHING TO LOSE WHILE WE RISK LOSING EVERYTHING.

DEN-SHICHIRŌ MUST NOT DO THIS.
SOME-ONE WILL FIGHT IN HIS STEAD.

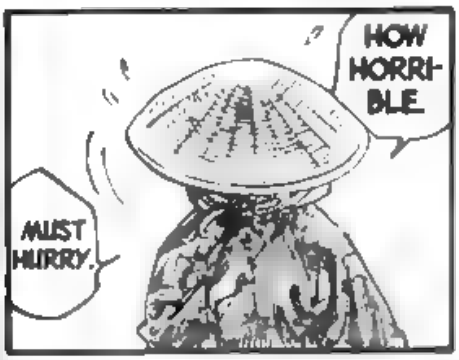
I HAVE A PLAN.

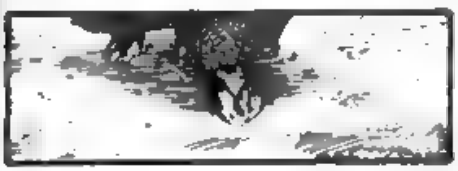
Vagabond


BLOOD
!

THAT'S WHY THE STREETS ARE EMPTY.
IT'S BECAUSE OF THOSE MURDERS YESTER-DAY.

FICH
FICH

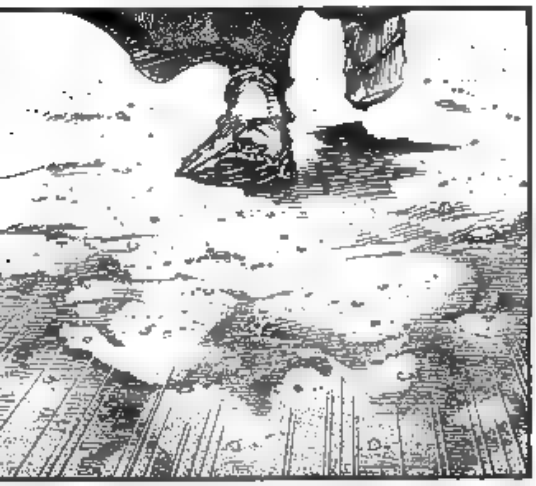

HOW HORRI-BLE.
MUST HURRY.

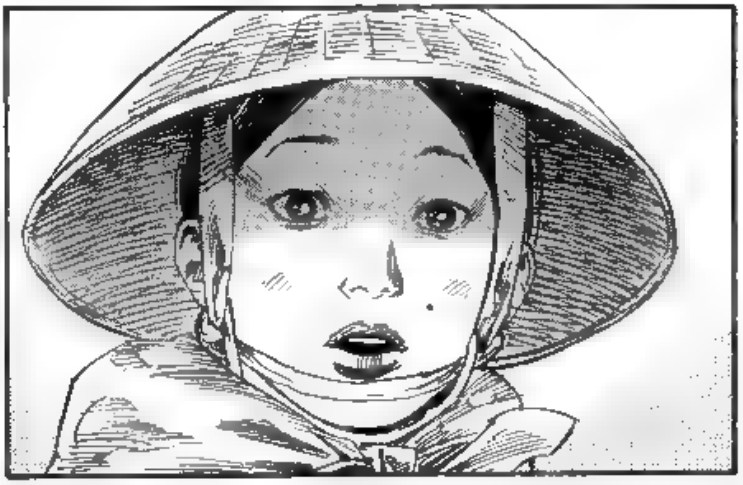


#197 The Real Kojirō

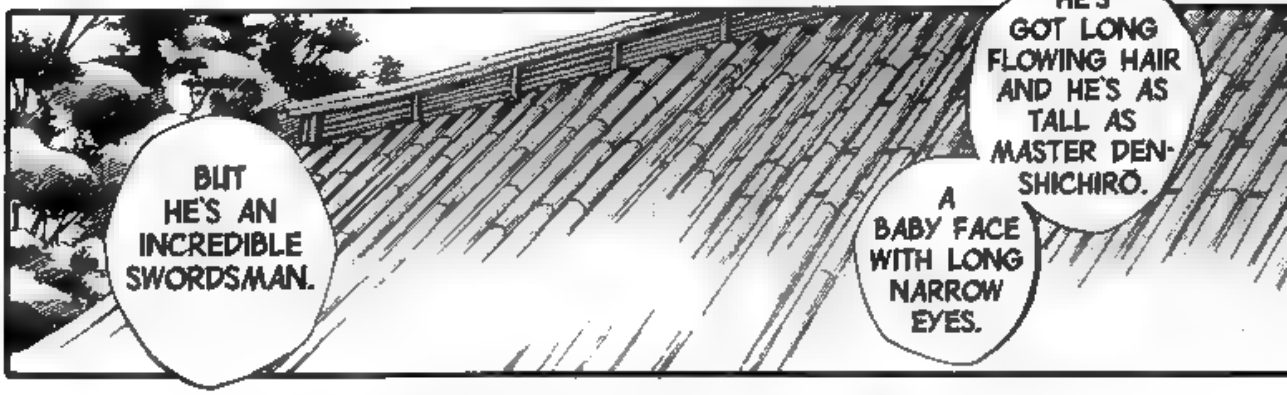
.....
GLANCE

!!





UM...
WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?
THIS ISN'T ...


HE'S GOT LONG FLOWING HAIR AND HE'S AS TALL AS MASTER DEN-SHICHIRŌ.
A BABY FACE WITH LONG NARROW EYES.
BUT HE'S AN INCREDIBLE SWORDSMAN.

WE SHOULD HAVE AN IDEA OF MUSASHI'S WHERE-ABOUTS BY NOW.

NOW THEN...
HOW SHALL I BRING THIS UP WITH DENSHICHIRŌ?

AND HE'S DEAF.
...!?

WE MUST WELCOME HIM AS A GUEST TO OUR SCHOOL.
DON'T BE RUDE. BE GRACIOUS, BUT BRING HIM HERE.
YES, SIR!!

AT THE HON'AMI ESTATE.
I'M CER-TAIN.
I WAITED OUTSIDE FOR A WHILE, BUT HE NEVER CAME OUT.
THAT MUST BE WHERE HE'S STAYING.
I SEE.
AND?
I FOLLOWED YOUR ORDERS AND FOLLOWED THAT SAMURAI YESTERDAY.
HE'S STAYING AT THE HON'AMI ESTATE.
WHAT'S THAT?
WELL DONE.
AMBUSHING MUSASHI MAY NO LONGER BE AN OPTION...
HON'AMI KŌETSU...
...

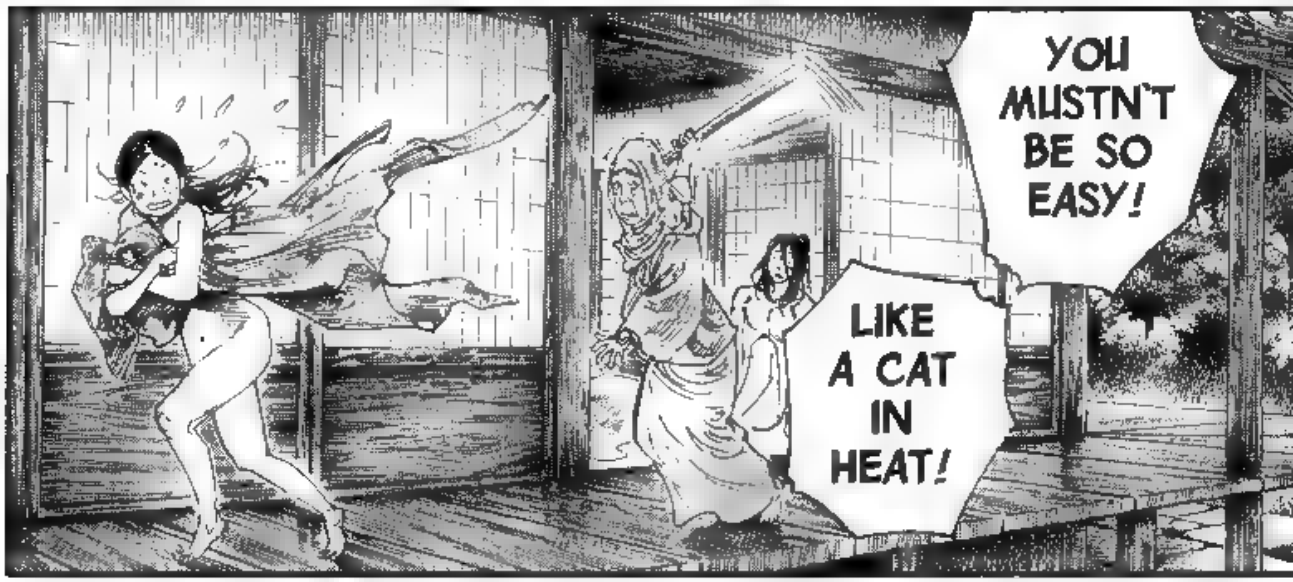
SHALL I BRING YOU SOME INK?
SPLD

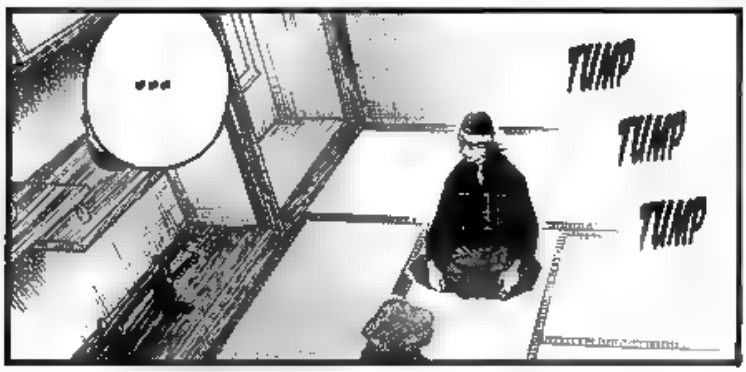
.....
A WOMAN STANDING AT A BRIDGE.
WHO IS IT?
THAT IS A PERSON, ISN'T IT?
IT'S A PUMPKIN.
WITH WATER, I CAN KEEP REUSING THE SAME PIECE OF PAPER.
.....
HE CAME AFTER ME.
.....
I HEARD GION TŌJI, ONE OF THE TEN SWORDSMEN OF THE YOSHIOKA, WAS CUT DOWN YESTERDAY.

HE WASN'T IN HIS RIGHT MIND.
I WAS JUST LUCKY.
IF MY FIRST SWING MISSED, THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT WOULD'VE HAPPENED.
BE-SIDES...
.....
YOU SEEM ON EDGE.
I SAID THAT HE CAME AFTER ME.
HM?
THAT'S NOT RIGHT...
...
I STARTED IT A YEAR AGO...
BUT THAT'S NOT REALLY TRUE...

MUSASHI ...
AHH
MHH
PERHAPS THIS FIGHT WITH YOSHIOKA HAS SPUN OUT OF CONTROL.
... MAYBE A KITTEN ... ...
CATS?
AHH
UMHHH
... NOT AT ALL.
IN A FEW DAYS, I'LL FIGHT DENSHICHIRŌ AND IT WILL ALL BE OVER.
I JUST HAVE TO CONCEN-TRATE ON MY ART.
THAT'S ALL I NEED TO DO.

THD
THD
GET OUT !!
NO NEED FOR SECOND THOUGHTS.

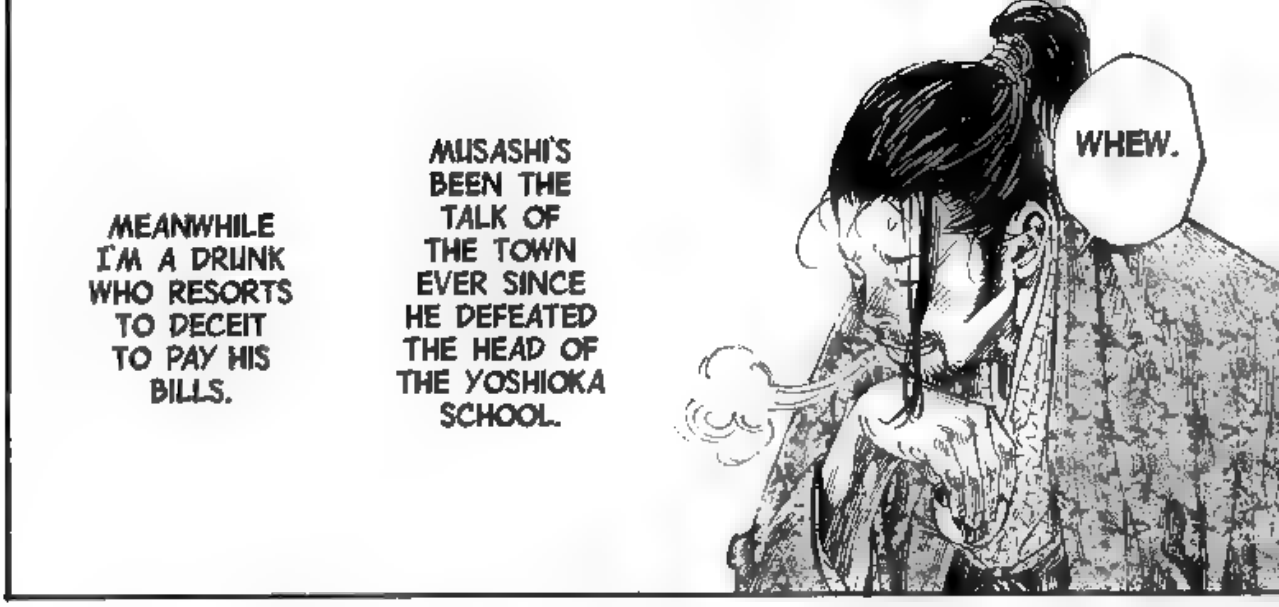

YOU MUSTN'T BE SO EASY!
LIKE A CAT IN HEAT!


...
TUMP
TUMP
TUMP

...?
HA HA HA
AN-OTHER GUEST OF OURS.

AUHH

THAT CAN'T BE.
I TALKED TO HIM.
KOJIRŌ IS DEAF?
HA HA...
FWIP
BUT...
BESIDES, THE REAL KOJIRŌ IS DEAD.
OF COURSE, I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS THAT.
HMPH.
I DON'T GET IT.
HE'S BEEN DEAD FOR A WHILE, BUT HIS REPUTATION SEEMS TO BE GROWING BY THE DAY.
AM I JUST IMAGINING THINGS?
FWIP
ONE THING I KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT HE'S DEAD.
OTHERWISE, I WOULDN'T HAVE HIS CERTIFICATE.


MEANWHILE I'M A DRUNK WHO RESORTS TO DECEIT TO PAY HIS BILLS.
MUSASHI'S BEEN THE TALK OF THE TOWN EVER SINCE HE DEFEATED THE HEAD OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.
WHEW.

IT'S ALL THAT MIYAMOTO MUSASHI'S FAULT.
WE'RE WORLDS APART...

MUSASHI'S JUST A COUNTRY BUMPKIN.
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI IS TO BLAME.
THE STREETS ARE EMPTY.
NO CUSTOMERS EVER SINCE YESTERDAY'S BLOOD-BATH.
HUH?
THAT'S RIGHT. WHAT A NUISANCE.
WHAT A NUISANCE ...

HEY... CALM DOWN. WHAT IF HE HEARS YOU?!
HE JUST WANTS TO SHOW OFF HOW STRONG HE IS. IF HE WERE REALLY STRONG HE WOULDN'T NEED TO DO THAT!!
JUST TO MAKE A SCENE!!
A REAL FIGHTER WOULD NEVER CUT DOWN PEOPLE LEFT AND RIGHT IN BROAD DAYLIGHT!!

OF COURSE, I'M SURE A TAVERN OWNER LIKE YOU HAS NEVER HEARD OF ME.
HA HA.
I'M SASAKI KOJIRŌ!!
I DON'T CARE. WHO DO YOU THINK I AM?!

...I'M PITIFUL ...

FWIP

COME ON, MUSASHI !!
YOU CAN'T HURT ME!!
I'LL TAKE YOU ON, RIGHT NOW!!
PLEASE STOP THIS NONSENSE !!

WHAT ?!
YOU'RE FROM THE YOSHI-OKA...
HUH?
DID YOU SAY YOU'RE SASAKI KOJIRŌ?

WAIT... I'VE SEEN THIS MAN BEFORE.
WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO COVER THAT UP?
HE'S SUS-PICIOUS.
HA HA
I'M SASAKI KOJI-JIRŌ.
I KNOW IT'S CONFUS-ING.
NO, I HEARD YOU SAY KOJIRŌ.

GRAB
THE WANTED POST-ING!
...
THAT DRAW-ING.
I GOT IT.
HURRY IT UP!!
...
WELL, I REALLY MUST BE GOING. WHAT DO I OWE YOU?
LET'S YOU AND I GO FOR A WALK.
NO.
I'M TELLING YOU, MY NAME IS SASAKI KOUJIRŌ!

...
THUNK
!!
AHH
!
THOK
UNGH
--
THWAK
THWAK
URGH.
SEE?
HUF
HUF
HUF
IT IS
HON'IDEN
MATAHACHI.
!!
YANK
TUGG

...MUST MEAN THAT YOU KNOW KOJIRŌ.
THE FACT THAT YOU MENTION HIS NAME...
IT WOULD BE TOO DANGEROUS TO POSE AS HIM WITHOUT KNOWING HIM AT ALL.
ARGH ...
AHH!
AHH...
PLIP
PLIP
...
THUNK
SAY SOME-THING.
THOK
AGH !
YOU BETTER COME UP WITH A BETTER STORY THAN THAT.
I-I DON'T KNOW HIM.
I MEAN, HE'S DEAD.
HUF
HUF
HUF

HM...?
AND NARROW EYES.
AND A BABY FACE.
HE'S AS TALL AS DENSHI-CHIRŌ SENSEI.
HE'S GOT LONG FLOWING HAIR...
.....
HEY, THIS ISN'T A SHOW. GO AWAY.
WAIT, SIR...

I'LL CUT YOU DOWN, KID!
GASP!!
HE'S DEAF!

AUHH.

TH-
THE
REAL
KOJIRŌ.
...?

About the Author

VAGABOND was created by Takehiko Inoue, author of the best-selling manga *SLAM DUNK*, with over 100 million copies in print worldwide. Critically acclaimed, Inoue received the 2000 Media Arts award for Manga from the Japanese Ministry of Culture as well as the 2000 Kodansha Award for best manga for his work on *VAGABOND*. In 2002, *VAGABOND* received the prestigious Tezuka award for best manga, and in 2003, Inoue was nominated for a 2003 Eisner Award for best writer/artist. To date *VAGABOND* has sold over 22 million copies throughout the world. In addition to his numerous manga titles, Inoue also created the character designs for the PlayStation basketball game, *ONE ON ONE*.

About *VAGABOND* and Miyamoto Musashi

Takehiko Inoue's *VAGABOND*, based on Eiji Yoshikawa's novel *MUSASHI*, is a fictional account of the life of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). The historical figure Miyamoto Musashi, author of the philosophical strategy guide *A BOOK OF FIVE RINGS*, was a master of the sword and was revered as a "sword-saint." He founded the Niten Ichi style of sword fighting, which is typified by fighting with both long and short swords simultaneously—holding the long sword with the right hand and the short sword with the left. Musashi was also a master of the "gentler arts"—he was a master of *sumi-e* (black ink drawings), metalworking, and woodcarving. The films that comprise *THE SAMURAI TRILOGY* directed by Hiroshi Inagaki and starring Toshiro Mifune, were also based on Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*. Inspired by the huge success of *VAGABOND* in Japan, in 2003 NHK produced the historical period drama *MUSASHI*. Also based on Yoshikawa's novel, this drama stars kabuki actor Shinnosuke Ichikawa as Musashi and TV star Ryoko Yonekura as Otsu.

A note on names:

The names presented within the context of this manga are presented in the traditional Japanese order—surname followed by first name. "Miyamoto" is Miyamoto Musashi's last name and "Musashi" is his first name. The name of the creator of *VAGABOND*, however, has been presented first name first, last name second. "Takehiko" is the author's first name and "Inoue" is his last name.

Glossary and Extraneous Background Information

A Brief Historical Overview
The Warring States or *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weak and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous *daimyo* (domainal lords). Looking to expand their spheres of control, the *daimyo* were constantly at war with each other. One *daimyo* in particular, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly successful, by the time of his assassination in 1582, he managed to control approximately one-third of Japan. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry on the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating a federation amongst the *daimyo,* and by 1590, order was restored to Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the *daimyo* from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its five-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, leading the major *daimyo* from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600) in Mino (located in present day Gifu Prefecture) where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would effectively rule Japan for the next 250 years. The political stability that resulted put mass numbers of samurai out of work. Masterless samurai, known as *ronin*, were forced to wander the land to seek out employment. This, the beginning of the Edo Period (1600-1868), sets the stage for many of the period dramas and *chambara* sword-fighting films that have popularized the image of the samurai to a Western audience.

Hon'ami Koetsu (1558-1637)
Famed artist and calligrapher who co-founded an influential arts movement called the Rinpa School. Koetsu was involved in numerous fields including tea ceremony, pottery, and calligraphy. In addition, Koetsu succeeded the line of his family's ancestral business of sword polishing and appraisals.

Hozoin Spear Technique
Created by the Buddhist monk Kakuzenbo Hoin In'ei (1521-1607) of Hozoin Temple, which was a sub-temple of Kofukuji Temple in Nara. This spear technique is typified by quick dexterous movements rather than the use of brute force.

Ito Ittosai (Dates unknown)
Founder of the Itto-ryu school of sword fighting. Before establishing his own style, Ittosai is said to have studied a variant of the Chujo-ryu style of sword fighting under Kanemaki Jisai's instruction.

Rengeoin
Located in eastern Kyoto, Rengeoin Temple is more commonly referred to as Sanjusangendo. The main hall of Rengeoin features an amazing display of 1001 Kannon Buddhist statues.

Sasaki Kojiro (dates unknown)
The legendary archrival of Miyamoto Musashi, Kojiro is believed to have studied the Chujo-ryu style of swordsmanship under the instruction of either Toda Seigen or Kanemaki Jisai. Kojiro was renowned for his *Tsubame-gaeshi*, or "swallow-cut" technique which was inspired by the movement of a swallow in flight.

Shinmen Takezo
Miyamoto Musashi's boyhood name.

Takuan Soho (1573-1645)
A monk of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, by the time Takuan was 37, he was appointed abbot of the leading temple of the Rinzai sect, Daitokuji. Takuan was an important figure whose acute and brutally honest advice was sought by influential and powerful figures such as Emperor Go Mizuno and the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu. His correspondence to Yagyu Munenori discussing Zen and swordsmanship entitled *THE UNFETTERED MIND* has become an influential treatise in both the areas of philosophy and martial arts. The pickled daikon radish, *takuan*, also bears his name.

The Yagyu Clan
Yagyu Muneyoshi Sekishusai (1527-1606) was the founder of the famed Yagyu-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyu Munenori (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key generals at the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan, and in 1632 the Yagyu were appointed as the *ometsuke*--responsible for the surveillance of the *daimyo*. Although the Yagyu clan has been depicted in Kazuo Koike's *LONE WOLF AND CUB* as the plotters of the downfall of Itto Ogami, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyu Clan is more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyu Jubei (1607-1650), is viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evildoers.

Yoshioka Kempo (dates unknown)
A distinguished warrior during the *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) and the founder of the renowned Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Yoshioka Kempo mastered the Kyohachi style of swordmanship and then modified it to form the Yoshioka style. In the context of Inoue's *VAGABOND*, as well as in Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*, Yoshioka Seijuro and Denshichiro are Kempo's sons, who are historically thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi on numerous occasions.

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